

INSPECTION REPORT

BLYTH NEW DELAVAL FIRST SCHOOL

Blyth

LEA area: Northumbria

Unique reference number: 122258

Headteacher: Mrs D T Worrall

Lead inspector: Mr A Margerison

Dates of inspection: 9 – 11 February 2004

Inspection number: 264280

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First School
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 - 9
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 135

School address: Delaval Gardens
New Delaval
Blyth
Northumberland
Postcode: NE24 4DA

Telephone number: 01670 353255

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Douglas

Date of previous inspection: November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small school is situated in a residential area of Blyth. Most of the pupils come from the area close to the school which is mainly local authority owned housing. There are 135 pupils on roll aged from 3 to 9 years, but this includes 18 children who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. When children start school, their attainment varies from one year to another, but overall it is well below that which is typical for their age. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also well above average. Currently, forty-three per cent of pupils have special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties. There are a very small number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Although the number of pupils who join and leave the school is, overall, broadly similar to the national average, this varies significantly from year to year, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Virtually all pupils are of white British origin and no pupils have English as an additional language. In 2002 the school was awarded the School Achievement Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| 21666 | Mr A Margerison | Lead inspector | English |
| | | | Geography |
| | | | History |
| | | | Foundation Stage |
| | | | English as an additional language |
| 9511 | Mrs A Longfield | Lay inspector | |
| 11611 | Mr J Hall | Team inspector | Science |
| | | | Information and communication technology |
| | | | Design and technology |
| | | | Physical education |
| | | | Special educational needs |
| 22881 | Mr G Halliday | Team inspector | Mathematics |
| | | | Art and design |
| | | | Music |
| | | | Religious education |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a fairly effective school that provides good value for money. It is well led by the headteacher and key staff.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher has very high aspirations and a very clear vision for the school.
- In nursery and reception, teaching is good so children achieve well.
- The school's methods for promoting and developing pupils' personal skills are effective.
- Teachers manage pupils well in lessons so they behave well.
- Pupils use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills infrequently in other subjects.
- Teachers do not use questions consistently or plan activities that sufficiently challenge pupils of different abilities in all parts of lessons.
- Subject leaders do not have enough time allowed to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Pupils are very well cared for and supported well.

Since the last inspection, the school has improved well. Teaching is consistently good in reception and is now satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Teachers have had training in managing pupils so lessons are calm and orderly. The curriculum for science has been improved by introducing a whole school scheme and providing support for teachers. Standards have not risen significantly in national tests, but they have improved. However, there are still not enough activities requiring pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in lessons.

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 | E | E | D |
| writing | E | D | E | D |
| mathematics | D | E | 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 achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. In nursery and reception children achieve well. However, due to their very low starting point, most children do not attain the standards they are expected to reach by the end of reception in most areas of learning. They achieve very well in their personal and social development to attain the levels expected for their age. Children's communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical development are below the standard expected at the end of reception, but effective teaching develops children's basic skills in reading and number well. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is also below the expected level for their age by the end of the reception year. In their creative development, children achieve well to attain the expected levels for their age. They make satisfactory progress in their physical development to attain standards broadly typical standards. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2, (see table above) were not significantly different from the previous year, but they reflected the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that group and the above average proportion of pupils who joined the school during Years 1 and 2. However, pupils with special educational needs achieved well. Inspection evidence shows that this pattern is continuing. Pupils currently in Years 1 to 4 are achieving satisfactorily in all subjects except listening and writing where they achieve well. However, the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs means that the proportion of pupils attaining expected standards in reading, writing and

mathematics is below average in Year 2 and below expectations in Year 4. Standards in ICT, science and religious education are also below expectations in Years 2 and 4. Standards in physical education in Year 2 are in line with those expected. Insufficient evidence was available to make judgements on standards in Year 4 or on any other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development are good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well. Inspection evidence shows that attendance is satisfactory, but due to a number of parents who do not ensure their children are on time for school, a significant proportion of pupils arrive late. Relationships between pupils are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory.

There are consistent strengths in all classes and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. In nursery and reception, teachers plan a very good range of activities that develop children's ability to work very effectively on their own and with others. Teaching is good in reception where the teacher focuses on developing children's basic personal, literacy and numeracy skills so children make good progress and achieve well. In Years 1 to 4, teaching is satisfactory overall. However, in all classes, teachers expect pupils to behave well and to do their best. As a result pupils try very hard, are fully involved in their work and want to succeed. Support staff are used very effectively by teachers and make a very significant contribution to the progress pupils make, particularly those with special educational needs. Teachers teach basic skills well in English and mathematics, but there are not enough activities planned in other lessons for pupils to practise and use these skills. In addition, in some lessons, more capable pupils are not fully challenged by individual tasks or by teachers questioning and ICT is not used sufficiently. Assessment methods are thorough, particularly in English and mathematics and the information is used well to set pupils' targets in Years 3 and 4, but this is inconsistent throughout the school. There are no similar systems in place in other subjects.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is good in nursery and reception. It is enriched by a good range of sporting activities and provision for pupils personal, health and social education and those with special educational needs is good. The school has very good procedures for pupils' care and welfare. The school has established good links with the parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is a very good role model for staff and pupils. Her very clear vision for the school is based on effective evaluation of its own performance so short and medium strategic planning are accurately focussed upon the main areas it needs to work on. The headteacher is well supported by senior managers and together they have created a positive ethos based on strong teamwork. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school clearly, they have effective systems to monitor the impact of developments and to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The school improvement plan includes a rolling programme for all subject leaders to evaluate standards, teaching and learning in their subjects starting with English and mathematics, but because it is in its early stages, other subject leaders do not have a clear view of standards, achievement or the strengths and weaknesses in their areas.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very high opinion of the school and its work. They hold the headteacher in very high regard, consider the teaching to be good and really value the support it provides for pupils. Pupils feel very positively about their school and enjoy taking part in lessons and activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that teachers' planning consistently identifies activities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and and ICT skills in other subject lessons.
- Plan classroom activities that challenge pupils of different abilities when they work on their own.
- Improve teachers' use of questions to allow all pupils to express and develop their understanding.
- Ensure that all subject leaders are provided with sufficient time to effectively monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. From a very low starting point when they begin in nursery, children make good progress through nursery and reception. Pupils make sound progress thereafter. Due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in classes, standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and below expectations by the end of Year 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in nursery and reception.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their listening and writing skills.
- The proportion of pupils who attain the expected standards in reading, mathematics and English is below average by the end of Year 2.
- Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are below expectations in Years 2 and 4.

Commentary

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 13.5 (14.6) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 12.2 (13.7) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 13.8 (15.3) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1 In recent years, the school's results in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 have been improving at a similar rate to the national trend. However, they have been consistently below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to all schools and to similar schools. The main reason for this is the lower than average proportion of pupils who attain the expected level. In 2003 this pattern continued in reading and mathematics, but in writing the proportion of pupils who attained the expected level was average and an improvement on the previous year. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher than expected level in 2003 was average in reading and mathematics when compared to similar schools. This indicates that those pupils have the capability, attain levels that are in line with their ability and achieve satisfactorily. However, the school has to contend with four very significant factors that affect the pace of pupils' learning.

2 Firstly, children start in school with skills and knowledge that are well below that which is typical in the key areas of personal and social development, communication, language, literacy and mathematics. Secondly, class sizes are variable, but not large, so each pupil has a significant impact on overall results. The third factor is the high number of pupils who have special educational needs and finally, the number of pupils who leave and join the school in the course of a school year, is, in some year groups, high. Frequently, these factors combine to create very challenging circumstances for the school. For example, in the 2003 Year 2 group who took the national tests, a third had joined the school during Years 1 and 2 and forty four per cent of the class had additional support for special educational needs. A similar pattern applied in 2002 when a fifth of pupils joined the class during Years 1 and 2 and thirty seven per cent of pupils had additional support. Despite this, the school's results in National Curriculum tests were recognised nationally in 2002 with the School Achievement Award when the school achieved its targets. Analysis of data shows that those

pupils who are at the school throughout Years 1 and 2 achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics compared with their attainment at the end of reception.

3 In nursery and reception, children achieve well due to skilled teaching that focuses on developing their basic skills. In the nursery, this is particularly the case with their personal skills, in which they achieve very well, and with their spoken language development. This solid base is built on effectively in reception by the staff who provide a very broad range of activities that encourage independence, imaginative language development and social skills. Children with special educational needs and those of average ability benefit particularly from this approach and make rapid progress. The few children who are more capable make satisfactory progress. As a result, by the end of the reception year, children attain the levels expected in their personal and social development. The sound start children get in the nursery in language development is built on effectively in the reception class. Although standards are below those expected at the end of reception, effective teaching of early reading develops children's basic literacy skills well. A similar emphasis is placed on developing children's basic number skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. In these areas, children achieve well, although standards by the end of the reception year are below the expected levels for their age. In their creative development, children achieve well to attain the expected levels for their age. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development.

4 Inspection evidence reflects the results in recent national tests. Standards in Year 2 are below average in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics, due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs so the number of pupils attaining the expected levels is lower than average. However, pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, with pupils having special educational needs achieving well. Standards in speaking are below those expected, but pupils make good progress in developing their listening skills, so standards are in line with those expected. In science and ICT standards are below those expected. Standards physical education are in line with those expected.

5 As pupils move through Years 3 and 4 they achieve satisfactorily. However, the same factors that affected pupils' performance in national tests in 2002 and 2003, particularly the high number with special educational needs, mean that standards are below those expected. In English, pupils listen well to each other and develop their ability to respond to direct questions, but few volunteer extended answers or express their own opinions on the topic they are studying. In reading and writing, pupils' basic skills develop well, but many pupils' reading lacks fluency and in writing few pupils write extended or expressive pieces of work. Most of their writing is narrative. In mathematics, pupils develop secure understanding of different shapes and mathematical methods. Many do not have secure arithmetic skills so as a result, they are not very quick or accurate in mental calculation and have only a limited ability to use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems.

6 In most other subjects standards are below those expected. In science, pupils develop secure knowledge of the topics they study, but many do not clearly understand how to use their knowledge to plan and conduct investigations. In ICT, the school has recently had a new computer suite installed, but pupils have not had the chance to use this. Although they know how to use a range of programs and skills, few pupils are confident enough to use their knowledge to present their work or to process information on their own. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory. However, standards are below those expected in Years 2 and 4 because pupils' limited experience of the world means that they have a weak understanding of the bible and other world faiths. In physical education, pupils achieve well to attain standards broadly in line with expectations. Insufficient evidence was available to make secure judgements in any other subjects in Year 2 or Year 4.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, but their punctuality is unsatisfactory. They have positive attitudes to school and behave well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are interested in school, want to be involved in school activities and to take responsibility.
- Pupils have respect for each others' values, feelings and beliefs and develop a good appreciation of their own traditions.
- Pupils' relationships with each other are good, so pupils are largely free from any form of bullying or harassment.
- The school has high expectations of pupils' conduct.
- Children in nursery and reception achieve well in their personal and social skills.
- A significant number of parents do not ensure that their children arrive at school on time.

Commentary

7 Pupils are keen to come to school and all parents feel that their children enjoy school. Although attendance in 2003 was well below average, inspection evidence shows attendance is now satisfactory. The school now has good procedures to encourage and promote attendance. However, a significant number of parents do not ensure that they get their children to school on time so throughout the school there are a number of pupils who are consistently late. Although, most of this lateness is not directly the fault of the pupils themselves, it does not encourage them to appreciate the importance of punctuality.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.0 | 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 Pupils develop good attitudes to learning as they move through the school. In lessons they try hard to complete the tasks they are set. When they are clear about what they have to do they get to work quickly and concentrate well. However, on the few occasions when the explanations of tasks are not clear, some pupils, particularly in Year 4 take advantage of this to talk to each other rather than ask for clarification. Out of lessons, pupils are keen to be involved in the activities and responsibilities on offer. Pupils who are on the school council take their responsibilities very seriously and they all, even the youngest representatives, make valuable and constructive contributions.

9 Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good. The headteacher has introduced a whole school focus on improving behaviour and has introduced a variety of rewards and other incentives to promote positive conduct. For example, pupils can earn the right to 'Golden Time' on Friday afternoons, when they can choose from a variety of activities. These are effective in encouraging most pupils to behave appropriately and to recognise right from wrong. Pupils in most classes listen attentively to their teachers and each other, put up their hands to answer questions and behave well in classrooms, as they move around the school and in the dining hall. Although a few pupils' behaviour is boisterous, no serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour were seen in classes or outside. A few pupils do not respond to these strategies. Several of these pupils are on

the special educational needs register for behavioural difficulties and a few have additional external support from specialist teachers from the local education authority. These pupils' behaviour does, on occasions, distract and disturb lessons. However, the school takes a very serious view of any such behaviour and this reflects the ten exclusions in the last year. The boys involved have now left the school.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| | | | |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
| White – British | 134 | 10 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 1 | 0 | 0 |

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

10 The basis of the harmonious atmosphere in the school is the good relationships between pupils and the very good relationships they have with staff. The school's focus on developing pupils' personal and social skills begins in the nursery where children achieve well in this aspect of their learning. The good relationships between pupils are reflected in most pupils' assertion that they are largely free from any bullying or harassment. The harmony that exists between pupils in school also reflects the effective implementation of the school race equality policy and the very strong emphasis on developing and celebrating pupils' local traditions as well as teaching them about other peoples' cultures around the world. Due to teachers' good use of discussion in lessons and the good range of opportunities for pupils to be involved in the school they develop a good respect for each others feeling and beliefs.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning is satisfactory and assessment procedures are satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched well and pupils are very well cared for. The school has established good links with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in nursery and reception have good subject knowledge and plan effectively with a very strong emphasis on developing children's personal, social and basic language skills.
- Individual support for pupils with special educational needs is effective.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Most lessons are brisk and as a result pupils concentrate hard.
- Independent activities are not sufficiently varied to challenge all pupils.
- Teachers' questions in discussions do not extend the language skills of all pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 2 (7%) | 11 (36%) | 17 (57%) | 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.

11 Throughout the school, lessons are orderly and positive experiences for pupils. The basis for this is the high expectations teachers and support staff have of pupils' behaviour. In all classes, they are very consistent in their insistence on pupils listening to each other and conforming to basic classroom rules such as putting up hands to answer. As a result, most pupils behave well in lessons. A few pupils have behavioural difficulties and create some distraction for teachers and other pupils, but generally these pupils are well managed by staff so their impact on the pace of lessons is minimised. In addition, some pupils in Year 1 do not have a clear understanding of how to attract adult attention appropriately and call out answers. This improves as pupils move through the school, as teachers' effective use of whole school management strategies take effect. The aims of lessons are usually shared with pupils at the start of lessons so they know what they will be learning about. This clear structure ensures that most lessons are well organised and well paced.

12 Teaching in nursery and reception is good. This is mainly due to the very strong emphasis that teachers place on developing children's basic skills. Activities are well planned so children achieve well in all the areas of learning. Lessons are mostly well organised and appropriately paced. In nursery, the opening parts of lessons are good and the main activities link well to the start. However, they are not always sufficiently varied to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged. As a result, in a few sessions, the pace drops so the initial vigour is lost. In reception, teaching is consistently good. Children are encouraged to contribute their ideas in discussions which promote their enthusiasm for learning well. Activities are well matched to initial discussions and generally provide opportunities for children of different abilities to extend their understanding. The teacher uses targets well to identify what children will learn and how they are getting on. Marking is linked effectively to these targets.

13 In Years 1 to 4, opening discussions are generally brisk and because teachers share the aims of the lessons with pupils they have a clear focus and pupils know what they will be learning about. Questions are used well to draw pupils into the lessons, but they are not consistently used enough to target specific pupils to check that they have understood or to encourage more capable pupils to extend and expand upon their ideas. However, group activities in lessons do not consistently reflect the range of abilities in the classes. Teachers place too much reliance on pupils producing work at their own level with support rather than varying the tasks provided for them. For example, they issue similar worksheets to all pupils rather than giving higher attainers activities that require them to use their literacy, number or ICT skills to record their ideas. This is also linked to teachers' limited use of assessment information to plan a variety of tasks and their inconsistent use of marking to explain to pupils how they can improve and to set them clear targets to work towards.

14 Support staff play an important part in lessons and teachers use their skills effectively to work with individuals and groups. Relationships between the staff and pupils are very good so pupils respond very well to encouragement and prompting. When they are working with groups staff achieve a good balance between helping pupils and prompting them whilst encouraging them to come up with an answer for themselves. This has a particularly positive impact on the progress that pupils with special educational needs make. However, occasionally support staff do not have a clear role in whole class discussions.

15 Assessment procedures in English and mathematics are good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders use this information well to identify whole school areas for

improvement and to predict where pupils might be by the end of the year. Class teachers are involved in this process, but since it is in its early stages, not all are sufficiently clear about their expectations of pupils over the next few months. As a result, only pupils in Years 3 and 4 have any regular involvement in setting and reviewing their own targets for learning. In other subjects the school uses the procedures recommended in the national subject guidance satisfactorily to evaluate how pupils are getting on.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. The opportunities for enrichment are good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in nursery and reception is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- The school has an innovative approach to developing the curriculum.
- The range of activities out of lessons and the numbers taking part are good.
- The range of activities requiring pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is too limited.

Commentary

16 The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides pupils with a broad range of activities and experiences covering all areas of the national curriculum. The curriculum for children in nursery and reception is good. Teachers provide children with plenty of experiences that develop their skills in all the areas of learning. A very strong emphasis is placed on developing children's language skills through discussions, role-play and collaborative activities. This continues in Years 1 to 4, but to a lesser extent with opportunities missed in lessons to encourage pupils to discuss and extend their ideas.

17 Since the last inspection the curriculum has improved well. The school has successfully introduced the national guidance for literacy and numeracy as the basis for planning English and mathematics lessons with literacy support programmes being introduced into Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 to develop and reinforce a few pupils' basic skills. However, the school is innovative, trying new approaches to teaching and learning to meet the different learning styles of pupils. For example, the school is working very closely with the NRAIS (Raising Aspirations in Society) team in Blyth on 'Thinking for learning' which is intended to develop pupils' ability to use and apply their knowledge and understanding to solve problems. A second initiative is being 'piloted' in conjunction with the education psychology service of the local education authority to raise standards in spelling and handwriting in Year 2. In some classes, the links between the activities in English, for example, and in other subjects such as history are well developed, but this is not fully consistent throughout the school. As a result, pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to practise and reinforce their basic skills. This also applies to the pupils' ability to use and apply their number and ICT skills

18 Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. There is no formal whole school scheme of work, but pupils have opportunities to discuss particular issues in 'circle time' sessions and assemblies. Drugs and sex education are provided appropriately in line with the school's policy.

19 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The individual support provided for pupils is good and well matched to the needs of each one. There are individual plans in place for all pupils with clear and explicit targets. Support staff use these targets well to plan activities in small group work so pupils make good progress towards them. However, teachers make less effective use of targets as a basis for planning activities in those parts of lessons where pupils are working in groups.

20 Pupils are provided with a good range of activities and experiences to enhance what they learn in lessons. A good range of clubs enables pupils to extend their skills and enjoyment in areas such as football and fitness and the school is involved in local sports activities. The number of pupils who take part is very good. However, there are good alternatives for pupils whose aptitudes are not sporting. For example, there are lunchtime clubs for photography, choir and gardening. Visits are linked appropriately to specific topics and make good use of the local area. The good range of visitors to school makes an important contribution to pupils' experiences in subjects such as dance, art and design and religious education. All the utilities, such as the police and fire service have visited, as well as a theatre group, an artist in residence and church representatives.

21 Since the last inspection, the number of support staff has increased well and they play an important role in school. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory, but have been improved well since the last inspection. Classrooms in the main building have been refurbished and the main corridor is now a major focal point for the school, incorporating a library area. Staff make good use of displays of pupils' work so the school is now a bright, attractive place to teach and learn. A new computer suite had been installed in the week prior to the inspection so it was not yet in use by pupils, but this facility has enhanced the provision for ICT significantly.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Support and guidance for pupils is good and the school involves pupils well in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for child protection are very good.
- The school places a very high priority on ensuring pupils are cared for and feel safe.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are good.
- The school council gives pupils of all ages a strong voice on the work of the school.

Commentary

22 For parents, the high standard of care and concern for pupils' welfare is a real strength of the school. Most parents feel that the school develops the 'whole person' very well, based on very good relationships between staff and pupils. Inspection evidence supports their view. The school has established comprehensive procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, including risk assessment. All staff know and understand the procedures for child protection which are managed very thoroughly by the headteacher.

23 The school has established good procedures for children starting in the nursery so they settle in very quickly. Teachers' inconsistency in involving pupils in setting their own learning targets limits their ability to give them formal academic advice, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Very good relationships throughout the school do, however, enable staff to give pupils clear, explicit advice to support them on a personal level. As result, most pupils feel happy and safe in school, they know who to speak to if they have a problem and the vast majority are confident that they will be listened to. Support staff play an important role in this work with pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with behavioural difficulties.

24 Considering the ages of the pupils, the school has good procedures to involve them in its work. Pupils are involved in a few whole school projects such as looking after the younger children in the nursery and reception under a 'buddy' arrangement. The school council is a strong voice and its views and comments are respected and valued by staff and pupils alike. Consequently, pupils understand how they can contribute to the school community and take an active, responsible part as 'citizens'.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established good links with parents and the community. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information provided for parents is very good.
- The school is well regarded in the local community, making good use of the local area and community facilities in lessons.
- Procedures to deal with parents' concerns are very good.
- The arrangements to prepare pupils for transfer to middle school are sound, but there are no regular curriculum links with other schools.

Commentary

25 The good links the school has established with parents are the result of hard work in recent years to involve them in the work of the school. The school constantly evaluates how it can be more effective in reaching more parents and changes its practice accordingly. The school runs an open door policy with the headteacher holding 'surgeries' on a fortnightly basis. Staff have a high visual profile on the playground and spend time talking informally with parents at the beginning and end of the day. As a result, most parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns and the vast majority feel that anything they bring to the school's attention will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents are supportive of the school in terms of joining in with fundraising activities and support their children with their homework. Although parents are welcomed into the building both as visitors and helpers, few parents come in help.

26 The information parents get about the work and policies of the school and the progress their children are making is very good. For example, they get information booklets on how they can help their children at home in areas such as spelling, reading and handwriting. Welcome meetings are held in September for all parents so that they can meet their child's teacher and find out about the curriculum. In addition, information and curriculum newsletters are given to parents on a termly basis. Parents are informed of their child's progress at two parent meetings in the year and through a detailed written report in the summer term which includes targets for the next year.

27 The school makes good use of the local community for various aspects of the curriculum, but also takes part in community activities. For example, pupils share harvest festival offerings with local elderly people and the choir sings in the local shopping centre. Pupils are involved in various local and national fundraising organisations such as St Oswald's Hospice in Blyth, the NSPCC and LEPR. The school also has good links with the middle school. Pupils in Year 4 visit the middle school in the autumn term for a project and then again in the summer term before they transfer in the following September. The school also acts as host to other local first schools and the middle school for staff training courses. However, there are few other regular curriculum links or projects.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. Governance of the school is good. The headteacher's leadership of the school is good. She is well supported by senior managers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school and a very clear vision for its future based on good self-evaluation procedures.
- The senior managers are good role models for staff.
- Governors are supportive of the school and have effective procedures in place for monitoring the impact of new initiatives.

- Subject leaders have too little time to monitor standards, teaching and learning.
- Induction procedures for new staff are good.

Commentary

28 The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school, the staff and pupils. Through her teaching and relationships with pupils, she is a very good role model for the whole school. Since her appointment some five terms ago, she has given a strong impetus to the school focussed on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. In order to achieve this, she has had to implement a significant number of changes to the way the school operates, these were mainly in response to the low standards in English and mathematics and partly in response to the behaviour of some pupils in the school at the time. She has recently established a senior management team consisting of the deputy headteacher, Key Stage 1 manager and Foundation Stage leader. These three staff have an increasingly high profile and together, give a clear direction for the school, and are good role models for the staff. As a management team they meet regularly to review whole school initiatives. However, as individuals they meet regularly with staff in their areas to discuss planning and the progress of specific pupils. As a result, standards are beginning to rise as the strong leadership and teamwork between staff begins to have an impact on teaching and learning.

29 Quite rightly, the school has focussed on improving the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics. The headteacher has worked closely with the subject leaders for these subjects to identify specific areas for development and to set targets for improvement. Data analysis is used well to evaluate and identify these areas. However, monitoring of teaching is at an early stage of implementation and other subject leaders have not had many opportunities to evaluate their own subjects so they do not have a clear view of standards, achievement or the strengths and weaknesses in their areas. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for special educational needs and manages it very effectively. Although this creates a heavy workload and is very demanding of her time, she has quite rightly recognised that this is a very important aspect of the school's work. The impact of these pupils on the school's results is significant and the few with behavioural difficulties have a negative impact on the learning in some classes. The headteacher is in an ideal position to have a clear overview of the provision and the progress that pupils are making.

30 Governors fulfil their statutory duties well, including ensuring that the school has a race equality policy. This forms the basis of the very good provision to ensure pupils are aware of cultures other than their own. Governors share the headteacher's very high aspirations for the school and have been fully involved in determining its immediate priorities for development. These aspirations are at the heart of the school improvement plan. This plan clearly identifies the priorities and who is responsible for different aspects, including the evidence the school will use to judge the impact on standards or provision. Governors challenge the senior management team on issues related to all aspects of the school improvement plan and they have been prepared to make difficult decisions in the recent past regarding staffing and financial management. Links have been established with subject leaders and governors play an important role in monitoring the impact of the initiatives the school undertakes, particularly those that can be evaluated by using academic performance data. Financial management by the headteacher and governors is good. They have a strong awareness of the importance of obtaining best value from any spending. Priorities for school improvement are carefully costed and governors have a programme to monitor the impact on teaching and learning of improvements. For example, the effectiveness of the investment in the new ICT suite on raising standards in ICT or the quality of teaching

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Total income | 406118 | Balance from previous year | 2621 |
| Total expenditure | 390926 | Balance carried forward to the next | 14158 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2299 | | |

31 Effective use of performance data and other indicators are at the heart of the school's self-evaluation and it is constantly seeking to improve all aspects of its provision. As a result, the headteacher, senior management team and governors have a very clear vision for the school. The school improvement plan accurately focuses on the priority areas the school needs to work on. It clearly identifies responsibilities, as well as the criteria by which success can be judged within specific timescales. The arrangements for the induction of new staff including newly qualified teachers are good and they benefit from individual support and advice from the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Performance management strategies are in place and these are closely linked to school priorities. Linking teaching staff's targets to improving standards in their class by using individual pupil performance as the indicator is currently underdeveloped.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is **good**

32 Before starting in the nursery, a few children have attended a local playgroup, but the majority have had little or no form of pre-school provision. As a result, their levels of learning are well below those that are typical for their age, particularly in their personal and social development, their communication, language and literacy skills and their understanding of basic mathematics. Most children have limited experiences so their knowledge and understanding of the world is restricted. As they move through nursery and reception, children achieve well because the teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned to provide a wide range of interesting, relevant activities, which are well matched to their needs. A well-organised environment and the carefully planned stimulating activities for all areas of learning are strong features of the provision, particularly in reception. The staff meet regularly to review the curriculum and to discuss individual children. As a result, the two classes are evolving well into a coherent unit dedicated to the meeting the needs of the children in the Foundation Stage. This effective approach to management ensures that all staff, including support staff, have a clear sense of direction and are well informed.

The school has good arrangements for children starting school and very positive links with parents. Individual needs are identified early and children receive very good care and support. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in developing their personal skills.
- Relationships between children and with adults are very positive.
- Adults provide very good role models.
- Good opportunities are provided for developing children's independence and self-confidence.

Commentary

33 Most children achieve very well considering their very low start on entry, and are likely to meet all the early learning goals by the end of reception. They settle down very quickly and feel both happy and secure. Children learn to share and take turns. They are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can do in a variety of learning situations, such as sharing refreshments daily in both nursery and reception classes. Children work and play in harmony. They learn to share equipment and to talk about what they are doing with each other. In stimulating play areas like 'Goldilocks' House', for example, children play imaginatively alongside others, using the props provided and most show developing confidence in trying new activities.

34 In both classes, teachers and support staff are good role models for children and work very closely with each other. They clearly explain to children what is expected of them. Most children are attentive and eager to learn, and enjoy showing their work to others. Staff create a supportive atmosphere where each child feels very special. Children are helped to form good relationships with others, through many good opportunities to work in pairs or as part of a group. Children are effectively taught the difference between right and wrong and guided towards behaving sensibly at all times. They show consideration and respect for property and each other.

35 Teachers have very high expectations of children's behaviour. Their thoughtful organisation of classrooms, resources and the helpful structure of the day effectively give children freedom of

choice when selecting activities. This increases their confidence and independence. Staff regularly check the level of children's involvement to make sure that they all get an opportunity to take part in all activities. Children's independence is promoted well through the use of a 'plan-do-review' approach in the nursery which introduces children to recording their own activities. This is developed well in reception, where children tick their names on a sheet when they have completed the main focus task for the session. The involvement of children from reception on the school council helps these children feel valued and part of their school community and substantially develops their understanding of having collective responsibility for their school.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards by the end of reception are below average, children achieve well.
- Creative play areas encourage children to talk to each other about what they are doing.
- Well-structured activities provide a broad range of experiences for children to develop their basic language and literacy skills.
- A home reading system is very well established.

Commentary

36 Teaching is good. Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills. From a very low starting point in the nursery, children achieve well but most are unlikely to attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

37 Children's good progress is a result of the many opportunities they are given to talk and listen. In both classes, all staff take every opportunity during all activities to develop the children's vocabulary through probing questioning and consistent insistence that children listen to the contributions of others. Teachers also provide children with a rich environment for them to develop and practise their speaking skills through discussion and displays. Around the classrooms there is a good range of books, both stories and factual and displays are carefully labelled to encourage children to look at them.

38 Adults in both nursery and reception classes talk to the children continuously, asking them questions to prompt their thinking, and encourage them to choose appropriate words to describe what they are doing. Very good relationships mean that children have the confidence to talk, and all adults are genuinely interested in what the children have to say. Children learn to enjoy books, and listen attentively when a story is read to them. In the nursery, children are encouraged to look at books. There are many occasions during the sessions when they can look at books themselves, handling them with care, and appreciating that text is read from left to right. Teachers place strong emphasis on developing children's knowledge of letter sounds and shapes to help children learn to read and write. They encourage children to hold pencils correctly while they write, draw or colour. There is, however, no systematic approach to encouraging children, particularly the more capable, to learn to write on their own through a variety of activities or simple recording of practical tasks.

39 In reception, this sound start is built upon well. In the reception class, children regularly read aloud to the teacher or another adult, and records are kept and shared between parents and school. The dialogue between home and school is very good. A variety of reading tasks travel home in a 'reading bag'. Families therefore help their children to learn letters and sounds and recognise early key words from the reading scheme, as well as reading with them. Parents support their children well and most record when they have heard their children read. Leaflets sent home help parents to understand how best they can help their children. The teacher uses the national guidance on teaching letters and sounds effectively, so the children are well advanced in their knowledge by the end of the reception year. Early writing is encouraged well through the many different methods the teacher uses to teach children letter shapes. The recently introduced whole school handwriting

scheme is started in reception, so children learn the basic shape and form of letters to prepare them for writing in a joined up style. There is a significant amount of reinforcement of these very basic skills, so children with special educational needs and lower attaining children make very good progress. However, few children, including the more capable of them are writing on their own in sentences using full stops or capital letters by the end of reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good so children achieve well.
- The attainment of most children is well below expectations.
- Practical activities are used effectively to reinforce and build on children's understanding.
- The activities in nursery develop children's basic skills, but are not varied enough to challenge all children fully.
- In whole class activities, support staff do not always have a clear role.

Commentary

40 Most children achieve well from a very low level on entry because of good teaching that makes effective use of a wide range of exciting and interesting activities and resources. However, a significant proportion of children do not attain the expected levels for their age by the end of reception. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. In both classes, adults use a variety of number rhymes and songs to help children count. They also take any opportunity to reinforce their basic number skills, for example by counting the number of children in the class. Whole class activities in the nursery are well paced and focus on developing children's enjoyment of number as well as their basic counting skills. Children in the nursery match, sort and count using every-day objects and both the older and full-time children are beginning to count to five with understanding. However, these practical activities are not always sufficiently varied to cater for the full range of abilities in the class, since all children do the same sorting or grouping task.

41 The reception teacher adopts a similar style in adaptations of the 'numeracy lesson' appropriate to a reception class. Already, most children are working securely with numbers up to ten, and a few more capable children count accurately up to twenty. The teaching is good because it concentrates upon building up understanding rather than rushing into formal recording at too early a stage. Whole class sessions are briskly paced. The class teacher has high expectations of behaviour and uses a good variety of incentives and rewards to reinforce what is expected.

42 Support staff work well with children in small group activities, but in a few sessions they do not have a clearly defined role in whole class discussions. The reception children's written recording of number demonstrates developing understanding of 'one more than' and 'one less than'. During one well-planned activity, where teaching was good, children were required to recognise simple patterns, such as a repeated stripe and spotted pattern. Around half the children could do this task successfully, but a significant proportion needed help to complete the task. All these practical activities prepare the way well for future learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because the teachers provide a good balance of intriguing experiences to arouse their curiosity and interest
- Practical activities introduce children to investigating and experimenting.

Commentary

43 Standards by the end of reception are below those expected for the children's age. However, children achieve well and the more capable are working at the levels expected. In the nursery, children achieve particularly well in learning the early scientific aptitudes of curiosity and observation. For example, in a good lesson, children were given bulbs, batteries and wire and through experimentation had to work out how to make the bulb light. As a result, they learnt that the batteries stored the power and that by connecting wires correctly they could make the bulb light. In reception, this firm basis for learning is built on very effectively with a strong emphasis on developing children's investigative and enquiry skills. For example, in a very good lesson, children were given gloves that had been filled with water then frozen. During this lesson, children learnt about the properties of water, but this basic knowledge was built on very effectively by investigating where in the classroom the 'hands' would melt the least. However, this lesson also illustrated the children's limited knowledge of the world. Most children knew that heat would make them melt more quickly, but a few were not clear about the difference between light and heat. They thought that a dark place would stop the melting rather than finding a very cold place to put the 'hands' in, such as the freezer or fridge. In both classes, there are sufficient resources for small-scale construction. Almost all of the children are confident in using the computer and there are programs constantly available for children to use that are well matched to the topic of the sessions so they are attracted to sit down and try them. In the nursery they use the mouse to control what is happening on the screen, and by the reception year, they open, close and use a variety of computer programs confidently. The nursery has a programme of visits out and visitors into school, so that the children begin to build up knowledge of the locality, the reception teacher builds upon this effectively with more direct teaching in order to prepare for National Curriculum work in Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff in nursery use the outside area well to enable children to practise their physical skills.
- The school hall is used well for formal teaching sessions for reception children.
- There are plenty of opportunities for children to use construction toys.

Commentary

44 The children are in line to meet the expected goals by the end of reception. Teaching is good so children learn well. In the nursery, children have regular opportunities to use the spacious outside area. The teacher uses this well to allow children to play on their own, but also for playing games and other structured activities that encourage children to run and move around in a more controlled way. In a good hall session, reception children showed how they could skip, clap and hop in response to music, moving with control and concentration, and using the hall space successfully. The children have good hand-eye co-ordination and manipulative skill because of the consistent access to construction sets and small world activities in both classes. Nursery children showed that they can pat, knead and roll play-dough and carefully use cutters to create specific shapes. Older children, especially boys, fasten together and build very competently with different construction toys.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan for very good links between creative development, personal and social development, and language and literacy.
- Spacious and imaginative role play areas have a very good impact upon the children's imaginative play, and their speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

45 The range of activities planned for this area of learning again emphasises the way that learning is fostered by the teaching of one area alongside several others. This results in a good standard of imaginative play, and standards of art work and music that are in line with the expected early learning goals. Teachers converse productively with the children about what they are trying to do or make. This helps them to communicate their ideas and make improvements. Music features strongly in both classes. In nursery, the teacher introduces children to using musical instruments early on so they learn how to create different sounds and the names of the instruments. Songs are incorporated in many activities and lessons to reinforce what they learning about, such as counting and as a way of re-focussing children's attention. As a result, children learn to sing a variety of rhymes and songs. As with modelling and using tools, there is better provision for small scale art work than large scale or three dimensional works. As a result, children learn to use different media including paint and the computer to create pictures and drawings. They learn to cut, shape and join different materials competently.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in developing their listening skills so standards in listening are in line with those expected in Years 2 and 4.
- Teachers place strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic literacy skills in whole class discussions.
- Teachers' management and organisation of lessons is effective so pupils behave well.
- Teachers do not use questions or written tasks enough to challenge all pupils fully.
- Assessment procedures are good, but the information is not used sufficiently.
- The subject is very well led by the subject co-ordinator.

Commentary

46 Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. However, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each class is high so by Years 2 and 4, the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level in reading and writing is below average. Pupils make good progress in developing their listening skills. Pupils are very attentive when teachers or other pupils are speaking. Due to the good support pupils get from class teachers and support staff, pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they move through the school. Standards in reading and writing are currently below average in Years 2 and 4. Pupils steadily develop their reading skills as they move through the school. By Year 4 pupils are competent readers, but, except for a small proportion of more capable pupils, they do not consistently extract the information from what they read to draw conclusions about characters' emotions. Only a few higher attainers read aloud with expression. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make sound progress in writing so most is legible and organised into sentences using full stops and capital letters accurately. Few pupils use a broader range of punctuation. Pupils' progress improves in Years 3 and 4, particularly in handwriting. By Year 4, the majority of pupils write neatly and legibly and most use a joined up style. They have a secure understanding of the basic skills of punctuation and grammar and use capital letters and full stops well. More capable pupils use speech marks and other more complex punctuation well. Spelling is good. However, pupils' use of expressive language in their writing is less well developed and few use emotive language or describe the feelings of characters in books or stories.

47 Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there are consistent strengths in many lessons in most classes. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour ensure that pupils listen well, try hard to do their best and behave very well. Learning intentions are shared with pupils at the start of the lessons so pupils are clear about what they will be learning. The starter activities of lessons in all classes are good and generally brisk. Teachers try to involve all pupils in the discussion by using good open-ended questions to encourage them to express their ideas and opinions. They do not, however, always use these questions to target specific pupils to ensure all pupils are fully involved in the lessons. Neither do they encourage more capable pupils to extend and expand upon their answers. The pace of these lesson activities is brisk. Teachers use books and other written texts well to illustrate the point they are aiming to teach. As a result, pupils' listening skills develop well and they make good progress in understanding the basic skills of punctuation, grammar and spelling. However, the links between the opening discussion and the main activities are occasionally tenuous and the variation of tasks is not always adequate to accommodate fully the range of attainment in all classes.

48 Support staff are used well throughout the school to work with individuals or groups in lessons and make a very significant contribution to the progress pupils with specific needs make. Support staff achieve a good balance between prompting pupils and helping them to do the set task.

They are effective when they are working with pupils with special educational needs in class or on specific programmes designed to develop their reading skills. As a result, these pupils make good progress. However, class teachers do not make enough use of the targets in pupils' individual education plans to provide specific activities to reinforce the work in lessons. Furthermore, support staff do not always have clear roles during whole class activities and are insufficiently involved in evaluating pupils' contribution to discussions.

49 The co-ordinator is giving a good lead to the subject. Together with the headteacher, through analysing national test data and monitoring planning, she has developed a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. This information has been used well to provide a detailed evaluation of the strengths in the subject and areas for development. Various initiatives have been put in place with the help of the local authority to respond to this analysis. Specific staff have had support and advice to help them develop their own skills. The subject leader has, however, not had enough time recently to evaluate the impact of these initiatives and support colleagues through observing their lessons. Assessment procedures are developing well as the school introduces additional tests at the end of each year to give additional information about pupils' standards and progress. Teachers are beginning to be involved in setting specific targets for each pupil in their class. Teachers in a few classes use this information well to set targets with pupils so they know what they need to do to improve, but this is not consistent across the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50 Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use their reading skills in other subjects such as history. Most teachers insist on good standards of written presentation. There is scope for improvement, however, as the lack of a whole school system of monitoring subjects such as history, geography and science limits class teachers' awareness of how they can link literacy lessons with other subjects, but this is not consistent. As a result, opportunities are missed to reinforce and consolidate pupils' skills. In a few classes it is good, but overall, pupils are not expected to write and record their own ideas with too many worksheets or copied writing so pupils, particularly the more capable, are not encouraged to write in different styles and contexts.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage pupils well so lessons are orderly and well paced.
- Provision and support for pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- Teachers do not consistently challenge higher attaining pupils.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work does not consistently show them how to improve their work.

Commentary

51 Standards are below expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is because in all aspects of mathematics a significant number of pupils find difficulty with their work. In particular, many have weak skills in mental arithmetic, which limits how accurately and quickly they calculate. They do not, for instance, have the basic understanding required to build up a secure knowledge of multiplication tables. In a lesson in Year 4 few pupils counted on in 3s from 0 to 30 with confidence.

52 Teaching is satisfactory. As a result, pupils achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress. Since the last inspection the National Numeracy Strategy has become fully embedded and this ensures that pupils learn progressively as they get older. The emphasis on a practical approach raises pupils' interest to a high level and aids their understanding. For instance, in a

lesson in Year 2 the teacher gave pupils good opportunities to learn how to estimate and weigh packaged items. This led to interesting discussions, which helped pupils to increase their accuracy.

53 A strength of teaching is the sensitive, firm and consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to maintain the interest of those pupils who have behavioural difficulties. This results in a calm, orderly atmosphere where pupils work productively together. Lessons are interesting, so pupils are keen to join in discussions. Sometimes, however, teachers do not pitch questions accurately enough to take account of pupils' different abilities. For instance, in one lesson questioning did not stretch higher attaining pupils and in another the questions left lower attainers floundering.

54 A big step forward since the last inspection is the provision of better opportunities for pupils who have special educational needs. As a result, they usually achieve well and make good progress. Classroom assistants give them good help and teachers plan work which matches the targets in their individual education plans. For instance, pupils in a lesson in Year 4 successfully added strings of units, such as $7 + 7 + 5$ together, to make numbers up to 20. Occasionally, however, the work they are expected to do is too hard and not related to their individual plans. Where this happens they do not achieve well.

55 A weakness in teaching is the inconsistent approach to providing higher attaining pupils with a good challenge to match their ability. Analysis of their books shows that too often they work at the same level as other pupils. On the other hand, the teacher in Year 4, for instance, ensures that these pupils often get a proper challenge. This was seen in a lesson where higher attainers enjoyed learning how to calculate turns in degrees within a circle. As a result, they achieved well and confidently compared their estimates and measurements.

56 Teachers help pupils to gain an understanding of their own learning in end-of-lesson discussions. They mark pupils' work regularly and discuss it with them while they work. However, most do not make enough constructive written comments on pupils' work to show them how to improve.

57 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has clear priorities for development, for instance, the development of pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics. However, she has had little time to keep a check on colleagues' teaching in the classroom, which prevents the subject leader from gaining a comprehensive overview of teaching and learning. This accounts for why pupils' skills in mental arithmetic remain at a low level and have not improved significantly since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Teachers now plan links with other subjects, an improvement since the last inspection. However, few examples were seen during the inspection or in pupils' work and it is still not done well enough, particularly in ICT and science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Management of the subject is good.
- Management of classroom behaviour is good.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in the subject.
- More able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to work independently.

Commentary

58 Standards in science are below the expected level in Year 2 and in Year 4, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The standards of the current Year 2 pupils when they entered the school were below what would be expected, which is still having a negative effective on their attainment. This is particularly noticeable when tasks require reading, writing or mathematical skills. Their achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs is, however, satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. The work that Year 2 pupils have done so far shows that most write simple descriptions of experiments and record the results, for example when looking at how water freezes and heats. They also understand the differences and similarities of a range of materials such as wood, metal, fabric and plastic. A significant minority of pupils, mainly those with special educational needs however, do not understand scientific ideas such as the way an electric circuit works. These pupils do not have the necessary level of reading, writing or number skills to find information and record their findings. Pupils in Year 4 are given many opportunities to write about science. Their books show that this is having a positive effect on their ability to record experiments and results in a methodical way, but a significant minority need help in doing so. Most pupils show an appropriate understanding of processes and materials. For example, that some materials, such as silver foil, are better conductors of electricity than plastic or cork. However, pupils do not have the skills to use equipment and materials to carry out the original enquiries and observations independently. This particularly restricts the opportunities for more able pupils to achieve better. Whilst some evidence shows that pupils have gathered information from sources such as CD-Rom, there is insufficient use of ICT in their work. They do not monitor, measure or record observations and findings or use ICT to present their work.

59 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with no unsatisfactory teaching observed. Teachers manage behaviour in the classroom well. In some classes a minority of pupils show challenging behaviour. Teachers have developed very effective strategies to contain disruptive behaviour and enable the majority of pupils to maintain a good pace of learning. They relate quietly to pupils individually in situations where behaviour is unacceptable and work hard to enhance pupils' social skills. Both teachers and support assistants know their pupils well and employ a consistently effective approach to maintaining a calm working atmosphere. However, there is currently little evidence in lessons that more able pupils extend their skills and knowledge through independent enquiry.

60 The subject is managed well. The subject leader supports teachers well and has a clear view of the areas for improvement and is working hard in this direction. She monitors planning and standards regularly. Initiatives such as enhancing thinking skills is beginning to have a positive effect on the way pupils with special educational needs acquire scientific knowledge.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A new computer suite and existing classroom computers provide good resources.
- Management of classroom behaviour is good.
- There is insufficient challenge for more able pupils.
- ICT is not sufficiently used to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

61 Standards in ICT are below the expected level in Year 2 and in Year 4, a decline in standards since the previous inspection. Most pupils in Year 2 understand how to use an art and design program to create pictures on a computer. They explain words such as "flood" and "undo" and produce simple labels in a word processing program to label their pictures. However, a significant minority do not possess sufficient reading, writing or mathematical skills to reach an appropriate level of attainment in generating and recording work with, for example, text and tables.

The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 4 understand how to use font sizes and styles in a word processing program for a variety of purposes, for example, when producing short stories and poems for display. They make more complex images using tools such as the repeat function. However, they have not acquired a higher level of skill in other areas of the subject. Their understanding is limited in other areas such as controlling devices and problem solving.

62 In the direct teaching sessions seen in both Years 1 and 2, teaching was satisfactory. Teachers manage behaviour in the classroom well. They have developed very effective strategies to maintain the pace of learning while dealing quietly and firmly with individual pupils when their behaviour is unacceptable. Both teachers and support assistants know their pupils well so there is a consistently effective approach to maintaining a calm working atmosphere. Both in ICT and other subject lessons seen, there is currently little evidence that pupils are given opportunities to enhance their computer skills independently. This means that more able pupils, in particular, do not extend their knowledge and understanding to realise their potential.

63 Resources are good. Each classroom has two or more computers and a newly installed computer suite. The school is now well placed to plan for the use of ICT across the curriculum and to raise standards within the subject programmes of study.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64 During the inspection very little evidence was seen of work done on computers during the current year. A few displays of pupils' work showed that they use word processing to present work, for example, to label pictures or write short stories and poems. Some pupils were seen using computers to consolidate mathematical and literacy skills. However, the use of computers outside of the direct teaching session is not a regular or consistent feature across different subjects.

HUMANITIES

65 **Geography** and **history** were not a focus for the inspection and the timetable arrangements meant that only one lesson in history was seen. As a result, there was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about provision. Planning documents indicate appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum requirements in both subjects. However, samples of current and previous written work show insufficient links between activities in this subject and literacy and numeracy. As a result, pupils are not provided with enough activities in lessons to reinforce and develop pupils' learning of these basic skills. In addition, the opportunities they have to use ICT in presenting their work are too limited.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers give interesting introductions to lessons that initially engage pupils effectively.
- Tasks are often mundane and in particular do not challenge higher attaining pupils.
- Teachers make good use of sources.
- Assemblies contribute well to pupils' work in religious education.

Commentary

66 Standards are below those required by the locally agreed syllabus. The main focus is on learning about the Christian tradition, and also about other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism.

Pupils' limited background knowledge impacts adversely on their ability to understand the meaning and significance of stories in the Bible.

67 Teaching is satisfactory and so pupils achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress. Teachers raise pupils' interest well with lively, informative lesson introductions and this leads to good discussions. They provide pupils with good opportunities to learn directly from source material such as the Bible. In a lesson in Year 4 pupils learned the value of friendship and trust from their reading about how Jesus cured a paralysed man. In Year 3 pupils gained an understanding of the spiritual nature of the Lord's Prayer and discussed what it taught them about God. However, in some lessons, pupils' interest falls away after the introductory session because the tasks teachers set are often uninspiring. Pupils' books in two classes indicate that work lacks challenge, especially for higher attaining pupils. This was confirmed in some lessons seen. In one lesson, for example, four higher attaining pupils showed little interest in their task and were not productive. As a result, their achievement was unsatisfactory.

68 Teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills in religious education lessons. However, in a lesson in Year 1 the teacher made good use of a recent visit to the parish church by asking pupils to write "thank you" letters to the vicar, explaining what they had learnt. This gave them good practice in their literacy skills while they recalled the features they had seen and this also consolidated their knowledge. The school does not have strong links with places of worship of the Christian faith or any links to promote other faiths. As a result, pupils' first-hand experiences are limited. Nevertheless, the parish vicar takes assemblies on occasions and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Teachers use assemblies well to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, during the inspection the theme was "belonging" and matched the ethos of the school well.

69 The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader has clear priorities for developing the subject. However, a weakness in keeping a check on colleagues' teaching in the classroom prevents her from gaining a comprehensive overview of teaching and learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70 Provision in art and design and music was sampled. Not enough evidence was available to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning.

71 One lesson was seen in **art and design**, in Year 3. Teaching was good and pupils were given good opportunities to investigate visual and tactile qualities of materials and to develop techniques in using modelling clay and colour. As a result of well organised activities and discussions, pupils achieved well. Teachers' planning and displays in classrooms and around the school indicate that teachers plan a suitable curriculum and that satisfactory standards have been maintained.

72 No lessons were seen in **music**. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils are given a suitable curriculum. A display of pupils' work in Year 4 and work in their books indicate they have interesting lessons. They learn how to interpret the mood of music and record their own compositions pictorially. In assemblies pupils sing pleasantly and tunefully.

73 In **design and technology** it is evident from teachers' planning, analysis of pupils' work and discussion with the subject manager that pupils gain experience of a range of materials and techniques. Pupils develop the expected subject skills through designing and making a variety of products. Year 2 pupils have designed and made puppets. The construction and finish shows that they have an appropriate level of skill when using the materials and tools involved. Year 3 pupils have successfully identified and used the ingredients and bread to make a range of sandwiches. Pupils in Year 4 have used their knowledge of linkage mechanisms to make a storybook with a number of pages, all with moving illustrations. They have used simple charts to show the process

and have evaluated their work. Resources are adequate for current use. Teachers' planning and the schemes of work show that all the appropriate programmes are identified for pupils to study.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Management of the subject is good.
- The curriculum is enhanced well by a good range of extra activities outside of lessons and many pupils take part.
- Teachers' ensure that support staff have clear roles in lessons.

Commentary

74 Standards in physical education are at the expected level in Year 2 as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Year 2 pupils, for example, explore various ways to balance on different parts of the body. They work well together in pairs, groups and individually to improve their performance. They understand how to exercise safely. Pupils in Year 3 practise a variety of ball skills, such as kicking, catching and throwing. They co-operate well in groups and compare their skills, learning different ways to improve their own performance. In the lessons seen, pupils' achievement was satisfactory overall. As no lessons were seen in Year 4 it is not possible to make a judgement on their standards. However, a substantial number of these pupils benefit from a good range of sports and fitness activities outside of lessons. Sports teams, extra coaching, training sessions and a fitness club are among a number of opportunities that these pupils take advantage of to raise their levels of skills and fitness. Teachers' planning shows that all the appropriate programmes of study are regularly taught to Year 4 pupils.

75 The quality of teaching seen during the week of the inspection was satisfactory overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen, which is an improvement since the previous inspection report. Teachers brief support staff well, enabling them to contribute to pupils' learning through good prompting of groups. Pupils maintain a sound pace of learning through lessons, because teachers have established good working routines that pupils understand and respond to well.

76 The subject is well led and managed. The teacher with responsibility for the subject has developed a good overview of its strengths and areas for development. Planning is looked at regularly and the ongoing development of resources and staff training is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The relationships between pupils and adults are good.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes make very good progress in developing their personal skills.
- The good range of activities that enrich the curriculum prepare pupils well for living in a diverse community.

Commentary

77 The positive attitudes and good behaviour of pupils show that the school makes good provision to develop pupils' personal skills and qualities. Throughout the school, staff place a very high priority on developing pupils' personal skills. From a low starting point, staff in nursery and reception build up children's personal skills very effectively by encouraging them to work, play and communicate with each other so that by the end of the reception year their skills in this area of

learning are in line with those expected. This good progress continues as pupils move through the school, based on the very good relationships in the school between adults and pupils. All staff, including the lunchtime and catering staff, contribute well to the provision. In science and physical education lessons, pupils begin to learn about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, having a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. The good opportunities pupils have to experience the contributions of visitors to school and the visits they make to other places and schools broaden their understanding of the wider world. Pupils also develop in this way an appreciation of the wealth and richness of different cultures and traditions. Pupils' regular and varied contributions to the work of the school develop their understanding and appreciation of citizenship well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 4 |
| How inclusive the school is | 3 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 5 |
| Pupils' achievement | 4 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 4 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 4 |
| The quality of teaching | 4 |
| How well pupils learn | 4 |
| The quality of assessment | 4 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 4 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 3 |

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