

INSPECTION REPORT

CONSETT INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT

Consett

LEA area: Co. Durham

Unique reference number: 114052

Headteacher: Mrs Lyn Blacklock

Lead inspector: Dr Brian Male

Dates of inspection: 5 – 7 July 2004

Inspection number: 264647

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Nursery
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 128 full-time and 44 part-time

School address: Teasdale Road
Consett
Co.Durham
Postcode: DH8 6AF

Telephone number: 01207 504464
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs Pat Holmes

Date of previous inspection: 19 October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This community infant school takes pupils from three to seven years old, and is maintained by the Durham Local Education Authority. At the time of the inspection there were 128 full-time pupils in five classes, and a further 44 pupils attending the nursery on a part-time basis. Many pupils start school with standards of attainment slightly below those usually found. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also in line with the national average. There is a very small proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities and none at an early stage of learning English. The school has been successful in gaining the School Achievement Award in 1999 and 2003, and the Artsmark in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---|
| 14806 | Dr Brian Male | Lead Inspector | English, science, history, geography, information and communication technology, special educational needs |
| 19419 | Mrs Sue Boyle | Lay Inspector | |
| 32848 | Mrs Jean O'Neil | Team inspector | Mathematics, religious education |
| 24027 | Mrs Bharahiti Kutty | Team Inspector | Foundation Stage, design and technology, art and design, music, physical education, English as an additional language |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is very caring school with a very positive ethos. The headteacher provides good leadership and sets a very good tone for relationships. Teaching is satisfactory overall with many lessons good. Children's achievement is satisfactory overall and good in the reception year. **The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory, and it provides satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils behave well and have very good attitudes to school
- Achievement is good in information and communications technology (ICT) by the end of Year 2
- The school provides very good support for pupils' personal development
- Relationships are very good, and teachers are committed to the welfare of their pupils
- There is a very good programme of extra-curricular activities
- Very good links with parents and the community enhance learning
- Targets in planning and monitoring do not always relate directly to standards of attainment
- Some lessons do not have quick enough pace and do not involve pupils sufficiently directly in first-hand practical activities
- The planning of the curriculum does not ensure an appropriate balance of time to all subjects and areas of learning

The school has made satisfactory progress overall since the previous inspection. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are still very good overall, and achievement is still satisfactory. Teaching has improved, and none is now unsatisfactory. The quality of leadership has improved. The key issues raised have been addressed except that the monitoring of provision still needs to focus more sharply on standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those where a similar proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Many children enter the nursery with standards of attainment slightly below those usually found. They make good progress through the reception year where teaching is good, and standards of attainment are generally in line with those usually found by the time children move into Year 1 in all the areas of learning, except personal development and the number element of mathematical development, where standards are above average. Progress is satisfactory through Years 1 and 2, and most pupils leave the school with standards of attainment that are broadly average. These standards are similar to the pupils' scores in 2003 national tests. Standards of reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average, although reading is better than writing. Standards in ICT are above average by the end of Year 2.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and are keen to take part in lessons. Most pupils behave very well, but there are a number of pupils who do not always behave appropriately, and so behaviour is good overall. Relationships are very good, and pupils are open, friendly and thoughtful of others. The rate of attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with many good lessons, particularly in the reception year. Teachers work very hard and have created a stimulating learning environment in their classrooms and in the school grounds. In the best lessons, there is a high level of challenge for pupils, a close focus on learning that will promote the higher levels of attainment, and pupils are involved in practical activities. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace to learning is slower and activities involve more listening and less independence to engage in first-hand experiences. These lessons are not always planned to ensure the highest attainment for all pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs receive some good support, particularly with their personal development.

The curriculum is broad, but heavily balanced to English and mathematics in terms of time. There is good provision for the arts and a very good programme of extra-curricular activities. The school provides very strong pastoral support.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership, particularly in the pastoral provision of the school, creating the positive ethos and building the partnership with parents and the community. Management is satisfactory overall but targets set in planning and evaluation need to focus more rigorously on standards of attainment. The governors make an effective contribution to the school's strategic direction, and provide good governance. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school, and there is no area where a significant number would like to see improvement. The school's very good partnership with parents promotes pupils' positive attitudes and enhances learning. Pupils are also very positive about the school, and the school takes very effective steps to ensure that pupils' views are sought and acted upon.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The next steps for the school are to:

- focus more rigorously on standards of attainment in the planning of lessons, the monitoring of progress and the evaluation of provision
- ensure that all lessons have a brisk pace, give pupils some independence in learning and involve pupils in first-hand, practical experiences
- ensure that curriculum planning allocates appropriate time and emphasis to each subject and area of learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children's achievement is satisfactory overall. Many children enter the nursery with slightly below average standards, but most have attained the expected levels by Year 1. Progress is satisfactory through Years 1 and 2, and standards at the end of Year 2 represent satisfactory achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good achievement in the reception year
- Pupils achieve well in reading and ICT by the end of Year 2
- Relatively few pupils attain the higher level in science by the end of Year 2

Commentary

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.1 (16.3) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 15.0 (13.5) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 16.6 (17.1) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds in 2003 were in line with the national average and represent satisfactory achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. This is broadly similar to previous years; there have been the expected fluctuations up and down with different year groups, but overall standards are generally satisfactory. Standards in 2004 tests, are slightly below those in 2003, especially in writing, but still represent satisfactory achievement overall. Inspection findings confirm these standards.
2. Many children enter the nursery with standards of attainment slightly below those usually found, especially in the area of language development. Children achieve well overall, particularly in the older reception class where teaching is good, and most are on track to attain the nationally expected early learning goals by the time they move into Year 1. Achievement is best in the areas of personal and mathematical development. Personal development is promoted well across the nursery and reception classes through the strong relationships and very good quality of support. There is a good focus on mathematical development with good teaching and interesting range of practical activities.
3. Standards in reading are good by the end of Year 2 because the school puts a great deal of emphasis on this aspect. Pupils read with confidence and enjoyment and a good number attains the higher expected level (Level 3) so achievement is good. Although an average number of pupils attain the expected level (Level 2b) in writing, many of those not attaining this level have very low attainment indeed, so the overall standards are below average. A relatively high number of pupils make simple spelling errors, although spellings are mainly phonetically correct, and relatively few aspire to the higher level where writing is organised, imaginative and clear. This is because teaching does not always focus sufficiently on specific skills for groups of pupils. Mathematical development is satisfactory overall, and pupils develop a good understanding of number. In science, most pupils attain the expected level (Level 2), but few attain the higher level because teaching does not focus sufficiently on this level. Standards in ICT are good and represent good achievement. Teaching here, especially for the oldest pupils is clear and well focused, and expectations are high.

4. As other subjects (history, geography, art, music, design and technology, religious education and physical education), were only sampled, there is no formal judgement about progress in these. The way the curriculum is planned does not ensure sufficient time for all these subjects as a great deal of time is spent on literacy and numeracy. This must, inevitably, affect standards. There is very good provision for the arts, and there are good examples of work in art and music.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in terms of social and behavioural targets, and appropriate progress in terms of their learning targets. Extra support for these pupils does not always focus sufficiently specifically on the learning targets for individuals. Pupils capable of higher attainment make generally satisfactory progress except in science where the level of challenge is not high enough.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Their behaviour is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils get on very well with each other
- Pupils concentrate well
- Pupils are valued as individuals

Commentary

6. Pupils enjoy school, work hard in lessons, and are keen to learn. They mostly remain interested and concentrate even in those lessons when they are expected to sit and listen for a long time. In these instances, they sometimes fidget as they lose concentration, but they continue to behave well. Those pupils who have behavioural problems are managed very well, so that their behaviour does not disrupt lessons. Overall, these very good attitudes and the good behaviour come from the very effective relationships that teachers have established with pupils, and contribute well to learning.
7. Pupils play well together and show a good level of regard for each other. They share playground equipment very well, and the older pupils organise themselves well in games such as skipping. Pupils enjoy playtimes and the positive atmosphere that prevails, and this supports their very positive attitudes to school. In lessons, pupils work well in group situations, co-operating sensibly and organising themselves well. They know how they should behave towards other children (one pupil pointed out succinctly 'You must keep your hands and feet to yourself'), and this all helps to ensure that lessons and play are harmonious. There is no problem with bullying.
8. Pupils are friendly and confident to talk to adults. They are happy in school because they feel valued as individuals, and know that they are well supported. They show respect to adults because of the way that adults relate to them. In this adults are very good role-models for relationships and respect.
9. The school is in the process of looking at improving the provision through the curriculum for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the strongly valuing ethos so evident in the daily life of the school is already impacting significantly on pupils' personal development, and particularly on their spiritual and social development. This has resulted in the very good relationships described above. Pupils have a very good range of cultural experiences and good opportunities to perform and to see performances; for example the recorder group are confident musicians, and other pupils appreciate their contribution to assembly. Pupils know about local culture from visits to places of interest, such as 'The Angel of the North'. The school is careful to ensure that pupils learn appropriately about other cultures. Pupils' moral development is very good with pupils clear about the need for appropriate behaviour, and the observance of rules.

10. Exclusion was used on a number of occasions last year when the school was awaiting support for particular special educational needs. The school dealt very well with the situation, which has now been resolved, and there has been no further exclusion.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| |
|---|
| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
| White – British |
| No ethnic group recorded |

| |
|----------------------|
| No of pupils on roll |
| 86 |
| 1 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
| 4 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |

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

11. Attendance was below the national rate for primary schools last year, but this is satisfactory taking account of an unusually high rate of illness in that year, and the rate is now higher. Most pupils arrive punctually for school but quite a few arrive just as the bell is rung.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Authorised absence | |
| School data | 6.6 |
| National data | 5.4 |

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Unauthorised absence | |
| School data | 0.0 |
| National data | 0.4 |

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but with a number of good lessons. The curriculum is broad but heavily balanced to literacy and numeracy and giving too little time for some other subjects. Support for pupils is very good particularly in the pastoral aspects (those concerned with personal development and behaviour). The very good partnership with parents contributes to learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with many lessons good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Procedures for assessment are also satisfactory, but information from assessment is not always used directly in teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the best lessons, there is high challenge and pupils are quickly involved in good practical activities
- In some lessons, the level of expectation is not appropriate
- Pupils sometimes have to listen for too long, and are not always given enough independence in their activities
- There is good teaching of reading and ICT that promotes good progress
- Some pupils with particular special needs are taught well
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|---------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 2 (6) | 15 (42) | 19 (52) | 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.

12. Teachers work very hard and are committed to the welfare of their pupils. Relationships are strong and pupils are valued as individuals. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory overall in English, mathematics and science and good in reading and ICT. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in other subjects for overall judgements to be made. Teaching is satisfactory overall in the nursery and reception classes, and often good for older reception pupils. It is particularly effective in the communication, language and mathematical aspects of development. Teaching is strongest for the older reception pupils. Teaching assistants generally work well with individual pupils and groups and make a valuable contribution to learning.
13. Assessment of pupils' attainment are carried out appropriately and the information is used well to track pupils' progress. The information is not always used sufficiently precisely to identify the learning needs of different groups within a class so that teaching can focus specifically on those needs. For example, the school is aware that by Year 2 most pupils have attained Level 2 in science, but lessons do not always focus on the elements of learning that would enable pupils to attain Level 3. In other lessons, the expectations can be too high, with tasks that are taken from programmes appropriate for much older pupils.
14. In the best lessons, there are high, but reasonable, expectations and children are involved in practical activities that excite their interest and extend their learning. For example, in a very good reception class lesson on letter sounds, pupils in billygoat masks selected a picture card and walked over a bridge. The troll under the bridge checked the picture on the card to see if it started with 'G' before allowing them to cross. The pupils enjoyed the role-play and focused well on the letter sounds. There were very high expectations in a very good Year 2 ICT lesson where pupils were taught very clearly to use an Internet search for information on Grace Darling. This enabled the pupils to attain the higher expected levels, but was not beyond their capability.
15. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the pace of learning is slower and children are often expected to listen to the teacher for extended periods without being involved in practical tasks. In some cases, teachers give detailed explanations of what to do in the ensuing activity, but children do not really understand these because they are not involved in the practical tasks themselves. In the most effective lessons, pupils move quickly to practical activities.
16. In some lessons, although pupils are involved in practical tasks, they are not given sufficient independence to explore the activities or try out their own ideas. This is particularly the case in science in Years 1 and 2, where the practical investigations are often set out rigidly on a worksheet. Year 1 and 2 pupils often have to write down plans for their activities before they start them. This is very difficult for young children, who develop their ideas best by taking part in the practical activities themselves. For example, in a very good reception class lesson, children strung paperclips together and used them to measure length. They found that they could add more clips in groups to adapt to longer objects. This was good learning.
17. In the nursery and reception classes, pupils are engaged in practical activities such as sand and water play, but the learning objectives are not always clear enough. Not enough time is given to independent learning through play in this way in the nursery and reception classes, and too much is spent in more formal whole-class activities. There is a high number of adult helpers in the nursery but they are not always deployed to the play activities with clear learning goals in mind.

18. There is some good teaching of pupils who have particular special educational needs in the areas of behaviour and personal development that enables them to make good progress in these aspects. Teaching and support for other learning goals is satisfactory, but does not always focus on the specific targets on pupils' individual education plans. In some cases, these targets need to be more specific. The teaching of pupils capable of higher attainment is generally satisfactory, and is good in ICT, but does not promote the highest levels in science.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. There are very good opportunities for curriculum enrichment. The accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good enrichment of the curriculum is provided by visits, visitors and a wide range of after-school and lunchtime activities
- There is very good provision for the arts
- Planning of the curriculum does not ensure appropriate emphasis for all subjects

Commentary

19. There is an appropriate curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes that ensure that they cover the six expected areas of learning, although planning in the reception classes uses the subjects of the National Curriculum rather than the Foundation Stage Curriculum that would be more appropriate. This sometimes results in inappropriate expectations and a heavy emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Access to the outdoor environment is restricted, particularly for reception children, and this limits their development.
20. Although the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 meets statutory requirements, it is not sufficiently well balanced. A heavy weighting of time is given to English and mathematics. This results in limited coverage of other subjects. The way the curriculum is planned does not ensure that appropriate time is allocated in each class, and the co-ordinator and subject leaders are not able to maintain an effective overview of curriculum delivery and its impact on pupil learning. However, the school makes very good provision for the arts and gives particular emphasis to the visual arts, music and drama. This has been recognised in the award of the national Artsmark.
21. The curriculum for all classes is greatly enriched by the wide range of visits and visitors. A very good extra-curricular programme of arts and sporting activities is available to pupils. These include an art club, choir, recorder group, computer club, drama, physical education and dance activities. A very good programme of educational visits and visitors includes theatres, museums, and visiting artists and performers.
22. The school's accommodation is good, and significant improvements have been made to the school grounds, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Classrooms are generally spacious, with extra teaching rooms for group work and specialist teaching adjoining some classrooms. The school and grounds are very well looked after by a very conscientious caretaker, and this impacts positively on the quality of the learning environment. Resources available to teachers and pupils are generally adequate, and the environment is enhanced by the wide range of displays reflecting all aspects of the school's life.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are very good. The provision of support and guidance based on monitoring is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are very caring
- Children feel very well supported
- Playground provision is good

Commentary

23. The school's arrangements for health and safety and for child protection are very thorough. All staff are clear about the policies, and in the case of child protection, all have had recent training. Adults have a very caring and understanding approach to children, for which the headteacher has set a very good tone. There are very good systems to encourage children to share concerns. Children know and are confident to go to an adult with worries, although sometimes they prefer to use the 'worry box'. The school always takes time to address children's worries, thus ensuring that they feel very well supported.
24. The school has been successful in making playtimes a positive experience for children. There is a good range of equipment that make playtimes enjoyable. Staffing levels are high and mid-day supervisory staff are particularly good at supporting the play.
25. There is good support for children based on the monitoring of their progress, particularly in the pastoral area and for those where there is a particular concern about behaviour or personal development. In terms of learning, children know they have targets, but they are not always clear about them and there is not always the focus on targets within lessons that would really involve children in their learning.
26. There are very good arrangements for involving pupils and taking account of their views. The 'Kids Council' is still at a relatively early stage of development, but already children's suggestions are being used and impacting on whole-school developments such as lunchtime arrangements. They even have an input in the school's development plan.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school and its work
- Links with the community have been developed very well

Commentary

27. Parents are very positive in their views of the school. They are very satisfied with the work of the school, and feel that their children are well cared for. They feel confident that concerns are dealt with, and are comfortable approaching the school with a problem. This is because the headteacher is always available, and she listens and considers parents' views. For example, there has been an increase in parent-teacher consultation evenings in response to a parental request, and the school has devised a system to make it clearer to parents how they can support work at home. The partnership is enhanced by the friendly welcome provided to all parents by

the efficient school secretary. The 'friends of the school' group is well established, very active and contributes financially to the school, for example, helping with the recent purchase of an interactive whiteboard. Parents are encouraged to help in classes and with homework. A number help in lessons, and a parent runs the school recorder group. Parents want their children to do well and most help their children with homework.

28. The school makes very good use of visitors to school to support the curriculum and children's personal development. There are very good links with the local community, for example, an established link with a local business is giving children exciting opportunities to learn about work in a factory.
29. The school's links with other schools are generally appropriate, with some curricular links which are enhancing the curriculum well, although, generally, curricular links are still at an early stage.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership is good, particularly in creating the very positive ethos and the high level of support for pupils. Management is satisfactory, but does not always focus sufficiently on standards of attainment. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher sets a very good tone for relationships and provides good leadership, particularly in the pastoral aspects of the school
- A strong and supportive ethos has been created
- The cycle of evaluation and planning which is long and rather complex needs to focus more specifically on standards of attainment

Commentary

30. The headteacher sets a clear educational direction, particularly in terms of the school's approach to supporting pupils and meeting the wide range of their needs. She is a very good role-model for the very supportive relationships that prevail throughout the school. She has a wide vision for the school that locates it well in the wider community. She has set a clear direction for the creation of the very positive ethos and approach to inclusion.
31. Other staff play an appropriate part in the leadership and management of the school. There is a collegiate approach, and teachers work together well in teams. Subject leaders make an appropriate contribution to their subjects. Curriculum plans are in place, and the next step is to ensure that these make clear the progress that needs to be made, and standards that are expected as children move through the school.
32. The governance of the school is good. Governors have a clear vision for the direction of the school particularly in terms of its supportive ethos and approach to pupils with special educational needs. They have a good understanding of the school's circumstances and they ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
33. The process of strategic planning is rather long and complex with a great deal of time devoted to evaluation and setting priorities for the coming year. A wide variety of parties from pupils to governors contribute to this process. Planning is comprehensive and detailed, but not always clearly focused on the key areas of raising standards of attainment in particular aspects.
34. Management is satisfactory. There is a good focus on pupils' personal development, and appropriate monitoring of pupils' progress in terms of the expected areas of learning and subjects. Targets for planning and evaluation need to focus more precisely on standards of

attainment within lessons and pupils' progress through the school. There is also a need to monitor the curriculum more precisely to ensure that there is appropriate time for all subjects. Performance management and staff development programmes are appropriate, and contribute to the school's effectiveness.

35. The school's finances are managed generally effectively, and the principles of best value are implemented appropriately. The income per pupil is relatively high, partly because of extra funding for a number of pupils with particular special educational needs. The school has also been successful in attracting extra funding from a range of sources for projects such as the playground equipment. The small deficit was incurred through paying for extra support for some pupils who had special educational needs until extra funding came through the normal sources. There are good plans in place to ensure that the budget will balance appropriately in the coming year.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 445735 |
| Total expenditure | 462534 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2946 |

| Balances (£) | |
|--|-------|
| Balance from previous year | 15034 |
| Balance carried forward to the next year | -1765 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory** overall. The well organised learning environment and the care and support children receive throughout the Foundation Stage help them to be happy and settled in school. Many children enter nursery with basic skills that are slightly below those expected of their age. Teaching is satisfactory overall and is often good, particularly for the older reception children. This, together with the small group support they receive, enables most children to achieve well. The majority are set to achieve the standards that are expected of their age by the end of the reception year. Although most sessions are well planned, there is sometimes an over emphasis on adult support and direction that restricts children's opportunity to explore and find things out for themselves. The co-ordinator is fairly new to the post, and her role is not yet sufficiently developed to have an impact on the quality of provision. The nursery nurses and the support staff play an important role in children's learning. All staff work well together as a team to provide children with a sound start to their education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The warm and secure environment enables children to feel happy and confident
- The consistently high expectations of all staff and the role-models they provide help children to develop their social skills
- Children are supportive of each other and they get on very well together

Commentary

37. The calm and well organised environment helps children to settle in quickly to the general routines of the nursery. They register their names as they come in and settle down to what they want to do. Children in reception classes are confident to take part in whole class discussions and offer their views. Staff in both nursery and reception classes take on children's suggestions seriously. This raises children's self esteem and they are confident to try out new things, such as taking part in the puppet show in the nursery or requesting the teacher to be measured to see whether the chain they have made is longer than her. The staff set high expectations of behaviour, and children respond very well. They know what is expected of them. They are very supportive of each other's needs. For example, one of the older children in the nursery tied the shoe lace for one of the younger child as she saw it was undone. Children are given opportunities to develop their independent skills by taking on different responsibilities in and around the classes. However, in many group activities there is an over emphasis on adult direction. The teaching overall is good and children achieve well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is systematic development of reading and writing skills
- Role-play areas and basic provision are used less effectively to develop children's language skills

Commentary

38. Many children enter nursery with immature communication and language skills for their age. They are encouraged to talk about what they have done and observed. Strategies such as the use of puppet theatre are effective in developing children's 'talk' and imagination. However, other group and focused activities in the nursery are not always used effectively to develop children's speaking and listening skills, and too much time is spent listening to adults. This restricts development. In the reception classes, whole-class sessions are used well to develop and extend children's speaking and listening skills. Speaking skills are not always developed through other areas of learning as there is sometimes an over-emphasis on recording in writing rather than talking about what children find out.
39. Early reading and writing skills are systematically taught. Children in the nursery are beginning to find out letter sounds through carefully planned games and activities, and reception class children are developing a sound understanding of initial letter sounds, rhyming words and letter blends. The older and more able children can write simple sentences showing an awareness of the use of full stops and capital letters. The careful use of puppets and the story of Three Billy goats Gruff made learning about letter sounds fun for older reception children, but activities such as this are less evident throughout the other classes. There are some exciting role-play areas but these are not sufficiently used to develop and extend children's language skills, and most of the language activities observed in reception were 'table-top activities' where children sat at their desks. Teaching in this area of learning is sound, overall, with some good sessions observed. The good teaching in the older reception class, and the small group support children receive, help many to achieve well. Most children are working in line with the expectations of the early learning goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Particular care is taken to develop children's mathematical vocabulary
- Teaching is good overall and pupils achieve well
- There are too few focused mathematical activities within play in the nursery

Commentary

40. Good support and intervention by adults help make learning fun for young children. Teachers take particular care in developing children's mathematical vocabulary, and children use appropriate words when comparing the height, weight and positions of objects, for example, older reception children were excited to find out objects that were longer, shorter and the same length as their model. Games and songs are used well to help children learn about numbers and counting. Although there were some good examples of using the outdoor area and individual play activities to extend children's counting skills, there are too few of these. Teaching is good overall, and most children are set to achieve the early learning goals.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits and visitors are used well to develop children's knowledge of the world around them
- Too much adult direction restricts children's freedom to explore and find out things for themselves

Commentary

41. Children in the nursery are given appropriate opportunities to have first-hand experiences of the world around them. The older children in the nursery can talk about the things they have observed, for example, how the caterpillar turned in to a butterfly. They explore the area around them and are excited to sort out things they have found during a 'treasure hunt'. Reception children are developing a good understanding of the use of every day technology, and are confident in using the computer and the listening centres. Children learn to construct models using a variety of construction materials, and can select the appropriate materials and tools to develop models for a specific purpose. However, too much adult direction and support in many of these activities restricts opportunity for exploring, investigating and making things for themselves. Children in both nursery and reception classes are developing a sound understanding of their own cultures and those of others through celebration of festivals and visits such as acting out a wedding in the church. The teaching is sound overall and most children are set to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in this area of learning is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lack of free access for reception children to use the outdoor area restricts the opportunities they have to develop their imagination and physical skills
- Children are enthusiastic and keen to take part in games and physical activities

Commentary

42. Children in the nursery demonstrate sound co-ordination and sense of space as they use different wheeled toys in and out of spaces in the outdoor area. They can respond well to the music and the instructions given to them. However, very often children are asked to copy the adult rather than making up movement from their imagination. Children in the nursery use small tools effectively when given the opportunity, and children in the reception classes enjoy using small tools and equipment. Reception children show good ball skills, and can throw and catch the ball with confidence, but lack of free access to the outdoor area restricts the opportunity they have to follow their interests and develop their physical skills. The teaching is satisfactory throughout the Foundation Stage, and children are set to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave reception.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision in this area of learning is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given a wide range of opportunities to explore different media and materials

Commentary

43. The well organised environment and the wide range of resources enable children to explore different media and materials. Children in the nursery are experimenting with how to mix colours. They are beginning to use lines and shapes to represent objects they have observed. In the reception class children are learning how to choose the appropriate colours and shapes to create what they have observed. Children in nursery use the role-play areas well to act out different roles, such as pirates on a ship, and in reception the children can develop a theme to their play and sustain this for a long period. Children are set to attain the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading represent good achievement
- Standards in writing are lowered because a number of pupils make basic spelling and punctuation errors

Commentary

44. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Most pupils enter Year 1 with standards of attainment generally in line with those expected. They make satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2 and overall standards are generally in line with the national average by the end of Year 2. Within this, standards in reading are higher than those in writing. The subject leader has a good overview of the subject and is aware of the need to improve standards in writing.
45. The school gives considerable emphasis to the teaching of reading. There is individual and group work, and pupils take books home to read. The national literacy strategy is used well to teach elements of reading and for older pupils to consider literary features such as the mood authors create in their writing. This emphasis enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read appropriate texts accurately and with understanding. Some classes allocate extra time each day for individual reading. These are very helpful for those pupils reading with the teacher or teaching assistant, and are useful for pupils whose reading is already well developed and who benefit from the opportunity to read. However, it is not always so helpful for pupils whose reading is not well developed and who are not receiving adult help.
46. Standards in writing are broadly in line with the national average, but are not as high as reading. Standards are slightly below average in terms of average point score this year because a number of pupils who did not reach the expected level had very low scores. A reasonable number attained the higher level (Level 3) but only just did so, and the average number attained the expected level (Level 2b). A relatively high number of pupils in both Years 1 and 2 have problems with some basic spellings. Almost all pupils can make phonetically plausible attempts at spelling (eg. 'wile' for 'while') so it is the spelling patterns that need to be learned. Punctuation and sentence structure are mainly accurate. The issue for many pupils is to write in a way that is organised, imaginative and clear, and to use more complex sentences. The focus of teaching within lessons is not always on the specific skills that different groups of pupils need to develop in order to achieve this. Many pupils also need to hear and see more examples of good writing so that they can pick up the style. Many also need more opportunities to improve their writing in terms of its style rather than just correcting errors of spelling or punctuation.
47. Most pupils listen well, and are confident in speech, but many older pupils find difficulty in expressing more complex ideas. The school creates many opportunities for listening, mainly to teachers and other adults, but there are relatively few occasions when there is time for pupils to talk at length about their ideas or to give more complex explanations. Some good opportunities are created in some classes in lessons such as personal and social development (PSHCE), and these encourage confidence as well as competence. Other classes could make more use of these.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. There is some good use of other subjects such as history and religious education to practise reading and writing skills. Older pupils use the Internet for research, and this also extends reading skills. Speaking and listening skills are developed in all subjects, but the emphasis is mainly on listening.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils find practical activities enjoyable, and therefore have good attitudes to mathematics
- The national numeracy strategy has been effectively implemented and adapted to meet the needs of the school
- Teachers are confident in their delivery of mathematics, and make lessons interesting

Commentary

49. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. This matches the 2003 national test results, and represents a decline since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be above expectation for age. The National Numeracy strategy has been adapted effectively to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed age class and to ensure that they make appropriate progress.

50. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are effectively planned and teachers are confident in their delivery of the subject. For example, a Carroll diagram was imaginatively demonstrated through a large-scale activity in the Year 1/2 class, and a Year 2 lesson featured good use of the interactive whiteboard to involve pupils fully in a series of multiplication and division problems. These practical activities enhance pupils' learning. Marking of work is often characterised by supportive comments. However, teachers rarely give pupils indications of how they might improve. Assessment of pupils' attainment against key objectives in mathematics is at an early stage; there are some examples of individual pupil target setting but little evidence of work being reviewed against these targets.

51. Pupils enjoy mathematics, and are particularly interested by the practical activities, and this promotes their good attitudes. Pupils co-operate well and work productively, both in groups and independently. ICT is used to support learning in mathematics, but computers in classrooms are seldom used as an integral part of maths teaching.

52. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has identified priorities for development and shared these with staff, but does not have a full overview of how practice in these areas is developing and impacting on standards, or of the quality of teaching in the subject overall.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. There is satisfactory use of mathematics in other subjects. For example, in a history lesson, effective use was made of a timeline to compare dates of key events in the Victorian era, and calculate time spans. Art work featured doubling and halving of a series of squares, and work on 'Treasure Islands' in geography included simple co-ordinates.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are involved in some good practical activities, but do not always have sufficient independence to develop their own ideas
- Lessons do not focus sufficiently on the higher levels of attainment

Commentary

54. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The curriculum covers the various elements of the required programmes of study appropriately, and almost all pupils acquire appropriate knowledge in all the areas. However, relatively few pupils attain the higher expected level (Level 3). This is because lessons do not focus sufficiently on these expectations. Within the school's two-year cycle of topics, pupils cover the various elements only once in either Year 1 or Year 2. It is therefore important that opportunities are created for pupils to progress to the higher levels in each topic. The subject leader has a good overview of the subject and is well aware of the fact that too few pupils attain Level 3. She has appropriate plans to address this issue.
55. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to engage in practical investigative activities, such as finding out about the relationship of the thickness of an elastic band to the pitch it produces when plucked. Pupils enjoy these activities, and the practical work is effective in developing ideas. For example, Year 2 pupils were fascinated by the concept that sound could be measured when you could not see or touch it. Talking about such ideas was confusing, but when pupils started ringing bells and thinking how far away they could be heard, the issues became clear in their minds.
56. The practice in many classes of asking pupils to write down their ideas about investigations before carrying them out is not altogether helpful, because for most pupils of this age it is only when they start engaging in the practical activities themselves that they work out the problems and the constraints. For example, it was not until they started plucking the elastic bands that Year 1 pupils worked out that tension was also a factor, and it was not until they started ringing the bells that Year 2 pupils realised that they could hear them all from the end of the corridor, so that would not work as a test. Learning was most effective where pupils were given some scope to explore ideas, and to decide how to record their findings.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Despite a rather limited range of computer equipment, pupils make good progress
- Older pupils use ICT confidently in a range of contexts and subjects

Commentary

57. Teaching is good overall, especially of the oldest pupils. Expectations for these pupils are high and they are introduced to a wide range of ICT skills such as data handling, word processing and digital photography. These are used across a good range of subjects. The interactive whiteboard in the Year 2 classroom is used very effectively to assist learning in subjects such as English and mathematics. Its use also develops pupils' confidence and understanding of ICT techniques. Younger pupils make good use of computer programs to assist learning in

mathematics, reading and spelling, and the computers in the library are well used to assist pupils who need extra support in learning.

58. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are able to use a range of computer programs with confidence. They can save and retrieve their work and use text, tables and images. They are able to use a sequence of instructions to control a device such as a 'roamer'. This is good achievement.
59. The subject leader provides clear direction and has been instrumental in the success of the subject. Her own expertise has been used well to improve the skills and confidence of other staff. The number of computers and other related equipment is relatively low, so the school has done particularly well to attain above average standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. There is particularly good use of ICT in a range of subjects through internet use, digital photography and data handling. Pupils make use of ICT to produce graphs and tables in mathematics and science. Digital photography is used in science and geography. Word-processing is used in English for writing and presenting work, but comparatively little use is made to amend and improve work. However, there is relatively little use of ICT in mathematics.

HUMANITIES

61. It was only possible to sample lessons in religious education, history and geography, so no overall judgements are made.
62. The school's planning for **history and geography** is based on topics such as 'The Sea' in which these subjects play a part. For example, in history, pupils were looking at the differences between seaside holidays between the 1950s and the present day. There is some thorough 'medium term' planning for this that refers to the activities and resources that would be appropriate and the learning goals that might be achieved. However, the planning does not make clear the amount of time that should be spent on each subject, nor the emphasis that should be placed upon it. As a result, the time allocated varies, and little time at all has been spent on geography this year. This inevitably affects standards of attainment. It also means that Year 2 pupils in the different classes do not cover the same ground. It is one of the recommendations of this report that the school should devise a system to ensure appropriate emphasis and coverage.
63. In one of the two **history** lessons seen, pupils were able to make appropriate comparisons and contrasts between seaside holidays from photographs of the seaside in the 1950. They were interested in the differences and would have been helped in their comparisons if they had similar present day photographs rather than relying on their memories. In the other lesson, a good technique of producing 'clues' from a box caught pupils' attention and built up a good picture of the conditions faced by the Victorian heroine, Grace Darling. This was followed up effectively with Internet research. In the one **geography** lesson seen, pupils were considering the differences in climate and topography between their home town and a wide range of places that had been visited by 'Barnaby Bear'. As the range of places included Africa and Australia, and the resources consisted of a postcard from each, the topic was rather broad for the young children. However, they were able to discern differences and used common sense to infer much more than the postcards contained.
64. Discussion with pupils and a review of their work in **religious education** indicates that pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own and others' lives, and this links well with the school's positive strategies for moral and spiritual development. However, progression in the subject is insufficiently planned, and pupils sometimes repeat work covered previously. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths is satisfactory, and has been maintained since the previous inspection through their study of Judaism, Christianity and other faiths such as Buddhism. In the

one lesson observed, and in assemblies, pupils were encouraged to reflect on, for example 'a special time in your life' or 'things you are good at', and pupils responded well to this. Visits to the local church and enactments of ceremonies such as a wedding and a christening make a positive contribution to pupils' experiences and widen the curriculum.

65. The subject leader for religious education has identified that some topics, such as the lives of Buddha or Moses, are being repeated from year to year. She is now preparing a new set of long term planning guidance, designed to ensure progression and support the teaching of the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

66. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in art and design, design and technology, physical education or music to make any overall judgement.
67. **Art and design work** takes a prominent place in the school curriculum. The art work around the school and discussion with pupils indicate that pupils are given opportunities to learn about a wide range of techniques and media. Pupils were enthusiastic to talk about what they have learned. Pupils in Year 1 talked about how they made sculptures of themselves using wire, straw and other materials. Year 2 pupils explained how they made a weaving picture using natural materials. There is evidence of good use of sketch books to develop ideas and skills. Pupils could talk about some of the famous artists they have studied like Anthony Gormley and Vincent Van Gogh. In the one lesson observed, pupils used their observational skills well to create the sculpture of the 'Angel of the North' in clay. The range of opportunities pupils have in lessons are further enhanced by the art club.
68. In **design and technology**, pupils are given appropriate opportunities to work with different materials like wood, papier-mâché and recycling materials in designing and making different products. In the discussion with pupils from Years 1 and 2, they could explain the different processes involved in making the products. Year 1 pupils talked about how they used Lego to develop designs for their model houses. Year 2 pupils had the opportunity to learn how to fix wheels on to axles. Pupils in both year groups show an awareness of the need to evaluate their products. They were enthusiastic to talk about the work they have done with the Beijing operatic society to create the robe and the masks for the performance. The school makes very good use of visits and visitors and specialist events like the design and technology day to develop pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject.
69. No **music** lesson was observed. However, singing in assemblies showed that pupils are developing a good sense of tune and rhythm. The school has a choir and they have recently participated in the local music festival. Pupils also benefit from the junior school brass band. The recorder club run by a parent helper further enhances the provision pupils have to learn music. Pupils are given very good opportunities to learn about music from different cultures, and pupils talked eagerly about the musical experiences they had from the visiting Caribbean steel band.
70. In a Year 1 **physical education** lesson pupils developed a sound understanding of how to use the space and different parts of their body to move around in different ways, and were given opportunities to evaluate their work and share good practice. The school provides very good opportunities to develop pupils' skills in different sports, games and dance through out of school clubs and links with the performing artists from other cultures.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION (PSHCE)

71. The school makes very good provision for PSHCE through its strong ethos, supportive approach and also through its formal programme. The headteacher gives a very good lead in this area and ensures that the programme is consistent with the school's overall approach. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils were encouraged to think deeply about aspects of the environment, and learned that differing points of view can be respected. The 'Kids' Council' is very effective in enabling pupils to understand how they can play a part in the community. It is unusual to see this working so well with such young children.

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

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