

INSPECTION REPORT

BEAMISH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT

Beamish, Stanley

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114021

Headteacher: Mr R W Thomas

Lead inspector: Mrs J Randall

Dates of inspection: 22 – 24 November 2004

Inspection number: 266384

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 56

School address: Co-operative Villas
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Stanley
County Durham
Postcode: DH9 0QN

Telephone number: 0191 370 0181
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Cllr E Hunter
governors:

Date of previous 26 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This smaller than average school, situated in a small community near Stanley in County Durham, serves a socially diverse area of which a significant part suffers from a high level of social and economic deprivation. Pupil mobility is a significant feature of the school, particularly affecting Years 3 to 6. This, combined with the very small numbers in each year group, makes comparisons with national data unsound and levels of attainment in each year group fluctuate. There are 37 full-time boys and girls in the main school and 38 part-time pupils in the Nursery class, which serves a wider area than the main school. Thirty-five per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals (well above

average). Almost all pupils are of white British origin and no pupils speak English as an additional language. Almost a third of the main school have recognised special educational needs, as do four pupils in the Nursery. Two pupils (6 per cent; higher than average) have statements of special educational need at the highest level. Special needs represented include physical, learning, social, emotional and behavioural, and speech and communication difficulties. The overall level of prior attainment on entry is well below average.

Since the previous inspection the school has a new headteacher. At the time of the inspection the school had the benefit of a specialist teacher as part of the National Primary Behaviour Strategy in recognition of the number of pupils with challenging behaviour that the school supports. This teacher is also a leading mathematics teacher. The Nursery is part of the Sure Start Initiative.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1471	J Randall	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language
13459	E Mills	Lay inspector	
31175	A Allison	Team inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is an effective and improving school that gives good value for money. Despite overall attainment on entry being well below average and the high mobility in the school with the addition of later entry pupils with learning difficulties, the overall standards at the end of Year 6 are average. The good leadership and management, the care and concern for all and the efforts of all staff to meet new challenges all contribute well to the good achievement of pupils.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- overall achievement is good because of the good teaching and the efforts of hard working staff;
- the leadership of the headteacher is a significant feature of improved teaching and standards;
- provision for pupils' personal development is good and results in good attitudes and behaviour;
- the school cares for all its pupils well and is very committed to including and meeting the individual needs of all;
- provision in the Nursery is not always good enough to ensure that all children learn as much as they could from each activity;
- the school has already recognised the need to develop skills of investigation, problem solving and research and to create more opportunities for pupils to be independent in their learning;
- planning for the use of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology as an integral part of all lessons is not yet fully secure but the school is already working on this.

The improvement since the previous inspection is very good. Standards have risen in the last year and all the issues for improvement have been tackled but attainment in science is still below average in Year 6. Behaviour and attitudes are now good. Teaching and learning, the curriculum, pupils' personal development, support and guidance, partnership with parents, provision for pupils with special educational needs and leadership and management have all improved. The school has recognised that the Foundation Stage has not been an area of focus for some time in terms of development and is now seeking to move forward with professional development, particularly in the areas of outdoor work and early writing skills.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E*	E*	E	D
mathematics	E	E*	E*	C
science	E*	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. This has replaced the usual comparison of schools that attained similarly at the end of Year 2 because of the high level of mobility in Years 3 to 6.
Because of the very small numbers in each year group these comparisons should be treated with caution.*

Overall achievement is good. Pupils enter the Nursery with overall prior attainment that is well below average. Most of these children do not continue into the Reception year in the main school. Standards are below average in all the goals that children are expected to attain by the end of the

Reception year. Standards in Year 2 are average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading and science. In the national tests in Year 2 at the end of 2004, standards were above average in reading, below in writing and average in mathematics when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools, standards were in the highest five per cent in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics. Year-on-year comparisons and comparisons with national figures should be treated with great caution as year groups are very small, making each pupil worth a large percentage and the percentage of pupils with special educational needs in each year group fluctuates significantly. Standards in Year 6 are average in English and mathematics and below average in science. In the national tests at the end of Year 6, standards in 2004 were well below average in English and mathematics and in the lowest five per cent in science. The apparent difference in standards between the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is because of the high level of mobility. A significant number of pupils left the school between Years 3 and 6. Almost half the year group had special educational needs. Again, national comparisons are unsound because of the very small year group but, despite the challenges presented, the school improved its results, particularly in relation to the comparison with similar schools and substantially so in mathematics, where several pupils only just missed gaining a higher level by one mark. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in mathematics, below average in English and in the lowest five per cent in science. A key feature of the rise in standards this year is the improvement in teaching, particularly the understanding that teachers now have of the place of investigation and problem solving in mathematics and science and this is now beginning to show through in pupils' skills and understanding. In Years 2 and 6, pupils attain similar standards to those expected nationally in information and communication technology and religious education. **Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good.** Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception years) and good in Years 1 to 2 and Years 3 to 6. The overall quality of the curriculum is good. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall but good in Years 1 to 6, with some shortcomings in the Nursery. Care and support for pupils and the links with parents and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governance is good. All legal responsibilities are met. All work as a team. The actions taken by the school are effective in helping the school to raise standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with all aspects of the school and feel that it has improved greatly since the previous inspection. All parents who expressed a view feel that their children enjoy coming to school and have every confidence in its leadership. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe and secure. They particularly value the 'buddy system' in the playground and the residential visits.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception years);
- strengthen the development of investigation, problem solving and research skills and create more opportunities for pupils to be independent in their learning;

- plan more rigorously for pupils to use the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall achievement is **good**. Children in the Nursery and Reception years achieve satisfactorily. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well because teachers work hard and lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all groups. Overall standards are average in Years 2 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in reading and science in Year 2.
- The school works hard to raise standards against a background of low expectations and from a low starting point of prior attainment.
- All groups of pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well because of good and well-targeted teaching, based on good tracking of pupils' learning and progress.

Commentary

- 1 Overall achievement is good. On entry to the school the overall level of prior attainment is well below average. In the Nursery children make satisfactory progress. However, few of these children continue to attend the school in the Reception class, year groups vary considerably in prior attainment and standards in the goals that children are expected to attain by the end of this year are below average in all areas of learning. Weaknesses in the school's provision to gain full learning value from all activities in this stage hinder development, particularly of language, mathematical and creative development, although direct teaching of literacy and mathematical skills is good.
- 2 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004, standards were above average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools they were in the highest five per cent in the country in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics. However, year groups are very small and national comparisons should be treated with caution. Inspection judgements are that standards in the present Year 2 are average in writing and mathematics, and above average in reading and science.
- 3 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to achieve well. In the group of pupils taking the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004, nearly half of the pupils had special educational needs and mobility was high, with some pupils leaving and four pupils arriving. Again national comparisons are unsound because of the very small year group but, despite the challenges presented, the school improved its results. This was particularly so in relation to the comparison with schools with similar percentages of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and substantially so in mathematics, although results were still well below the national average. Here, a few pupils only missed attaining the next level by one mark. When compared with similar schools, results were average in mathematics and below average in English.

Results were well below average in science when compared with all schools and in the lowest five per cent when compared with similar schools. Inspection judgements are that present standards in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and below average in science. In the present Year 6, only six pupils have attended all the way through the school. Three pupils recently joined the year group. Altogether, three pupils have special educational needs and the rest of the year group are on target to attain the average Level 4 by the end of the year, with one or two pupils targeted to attain the higher Level 5.

- 4 The school sets annual targets for attainment in English and mathematics in the national tests at the end of Year 6. These are based on knowledge of pupils' prior attainment gained from the school's good tracking procedures. Last year the school did not meet these targets but pupil mobility affected results considerably. The school has raised its targets for 2005, including the percentage of pupils expected to attain the higher Level 5. At present the school is on track to achieve them. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls or pupils with differing levels of prior attainment.
- 5 Standards in information and communication technology and religious education are similar to those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. No judgements have been made about standards in other subjects because insufficient evidence was available, in the time allowed, to make valid judgements. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with the highest level of special educational needs, achieve well because of the school's high level of concern to meet the needs of all pupils and the good provision for those pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with higher attainment and those who may be gifted and talented are identified and challenged appropriately. The school is slowly improving the percentage of pupils gaining or likely to gain higher than average levels in the national tests.
- 6 A key feature of the rise in standards this year is the improvement in teaching, particularly the understanding that teachers now have of the place of investigation and problem solving in mathematics and science. This is now beginning to show through in pupils' skills and understanding. The development planning indicates that the school is aware of the need for further work to be done in this aspect of learning, particularly in science in Years 3 to 6, but a good start has been made. The school has rightly identified the effect of pupils' lack of independence in learning on attainment and is successfully working towards developing in pupils more secure thinking skills and independent ideas and explorations. Key skills of literacy and numeracy have improved as the teachers became more confident in the use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Skills in information and communication technology have improved because the skills and confidence of the teachers have grown, as a result of professional development. Improved resources have also been effective in improving attainment. The school recognises in its planning that opportunities for using these key skills in other subjects will support further independence in learning and help to raise standards further. The current focus on improving speaking and listening skills on all possible occasions illustrates this well. Pupils often have lower than average vocabulary levels for their age, which restricts higher attainment in writing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and work hard in their lessons.
- The school's efforts to encourage and reward good behaviour are effective and have resulted in considerable improvement in standards of behaviour.
- The school has successfully halted the decline in attendance rates, which are now close to the rates achieved nationally.
- The school places great emphasis on the raising of pupils' self-esteem but they still lack confidence in making decisions about their own learning.
- Teaching about life in a culturally diverse society is not formally planned.

Commentary

- 7 Parents agree that their children enjoy coming to school and pupils echo this view. They work hard in their lessons and listen well to their teachers, joining in class discussions and working together well when they are required to do so. This is a result of good teaching and high expectations and, in turn, results in a calm and purposeful working environment. All pupils with special educational needs are enthusiastic about school. Their confidence and self-esteem is similar to other pupils because of the effective use of praise and encouragement by all staff.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	10.1	School data	0.1
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 Rates of attendance at the school declined in the last few years but the school has worked very hard to reverse this decline and rates are now only just below those achieved nationally. There is no unauthorised absence. The school now tracks the attendance of pupils well and follows up any absence rigorously.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
72	4	0
2	0	0
1	0	0

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

- 9 Behaviour in school and in the playground has improved greatly since the time of the previous inspection. There is now a strong emphasis on praising and rewarding

good attitudes and behaviour. All staff handle incidents of misbehaviour well, providing pupils with clear direction on the standards expected. Parents and pupils understand well the code of conduct set out by the school and the consequences of any misbehaviour, including exclusion. Positive attitudes and behaviour are rewarded with 'Golden Time' and are recognised in the presentation of awards at weekly celebration assemblies.

- 10 The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and contributes well to the good achievement. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Acts of collective worship meet legal requirements and occasional visitors such as local clergy add well to spiritual development. Both religious education lessons observed contributed well when Year 1 and 2 pupils reflected on the beauty in nature and when pupils in Years 5 and 6 experienced the sharing of food from the Sikh culture. Pupils gain a very good sense of right and wrong from the measures in place to support good behaviour. They discuss issues in religious education lessons, for example about sharing food with others. There are well-planned opportunities in lessons and in assemblies for the teaching and discussion of moral and ethical issues. Social development is fostered well. The school has identified the need to improve pupils' self-esteem and to instil in them self-respect and respect for others. The importance of caring for each other is reinforced both formally in lessons and informally throughout the school day. Staff treat pupils with respect and expect the same in return. As a result, pupils are responsible and mature by the time they reach Year 6 and even those pupils with recognised emotional, social and behavioural difficulties are not usually noticeable. Many pupils do, however, lack confidence when making decisions about their own learning because there are not enough opportunities for them to show independence and make choices and they find it difficult to think for themselves. The school has recognised this as an area for development. Pupils learn about those not as fortunate as themselves, and responsibility for animals and the environment, from their involvement with various charities. The school council contributes to a sense of citizenship and participation. The residential visit contributes to learning to be self-reliant. Children in the Nursery and Reception years make satisfactory progress towards many of the national early learning goals for social development but are still below expectations. Pupils learn well about their own culture from work in art, music, history and geography. The school has strong links with Beamish museum, contributing particularly well to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the local history. The school has a link with another school in Russia. This link, and work in religious education, enhances pupils' understanding of world cultures very well. The school acknowledges that there is more work to be done in formalising the teaching in other subjects about life in our culturally diverse society, although there are occasions where this is done.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. The curriculum is **good** overall and satisfactory in the Nursery and Reception years. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall with weaknesses in the Foundation Stage and good resources in Years 1 to 6. Care and guidance for pupils and the links with parents and the community are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. It is good in the Foundation Stage in class and group teaching situations and satisfactory where children choose and initiate learning themselves. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good overall and strongest in Years 5 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and good classroom management skills.
- The pace, challenge and match of tasks to pupils' needs is good in Years 1 to 6 and very good in Years 5 and 6.
- Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are taught well but are not yet fully developed in all other subjects.
- In the Foundation Stage, class direct teaching is good but there are too few times when adults engage with children in child-initiated activities to move learning forward.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	11	8	0	0	0

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

- 11 All teachers and other adults in the school are caring and work hard for the benefit of pupils. The school has improved the overall quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection and they are now good overall. Behaviour management is greatly improved and the school manages those pupils with recognised behavioural and emotional problems very well. Changes in the way year groups are arranged in classes have also been beneficial. The small classes give opportunity for teachers to know their pupils well and to cater well for their individual needs. For pupils with special educational needs, teachers plan well with tasks matched to prior learning and closely linked to individual education plans. Good help is provided by the teachers and the learning support assistants, who assess learning to help the teachers to plan for subsequent lessons. These pupils are included fully in all aspects of lessons. Higher-attaining pupils are recognised and challenged appropriately. The school is determined to increase the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6. In order to do this, the school has recognised the need to improve the quality and use of investigations and problem solving in science and mathematics. A good start has been made on this aspect of teaching and learning and benefits are already being seen in the improved attainment. Pupils are not fully confident in thinking for themselves and still wait for teachers to lead them. The school is now working to develop a more independent approach to learning. Lesson planning is good, with activities that interest and meet the needs of all groups of pupils. A particularly good example was the mathematics investigation in Years 5 and 6, where pupils could work at different levels within the same open-ended topic. Teachers are confident and have a good understanding of the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and this has improved standards. Professional development and better resources in information and communication

technology have improved teachers' confidence and skills, and there are subsequent improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and attainment. The school has recognised in its development planning that more use can be made of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in all subjects. It is beginning to take steps to make this happen, particularly in relation to the improvement of pupils' speaking and listening skills but this aspect is an area for further development.

- 12 In most lessons, teachers use penetrating questions to extend pupils' learning and are aware of the need to extend pupils' thinking skills. This is notably well done in Years 5 and 6 where the pace and challenge is particularly high. Lessons here are very demanding for these pupils and the very high expectations of effort and behaviour are improving achievement and attainment, despite the challenges presented by this class. All teachers make good use of well-chosen resources. The new interactive whiteboards in two classrooms are already being put to good use, although teachers are well aware that they have a great deal more potential than is used at present. Homework now plays an appropriate part in learning.
- 13 In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in all six areas of learning and there is good teaching of whole class and small groups. Some shortcomings in teaching lie in the organisation and management of the Nursery classroom to maximise the learning opportunities of every activity. Here teaching is strongest at the times when the teacher is working with the whole group, for example in musical activities or story and literacy sessions. The school has recognised that the Foundation Stage has not been an area of focus for some time and is now seeking to move forward with professional development, particularly in the areas of outdoor work and early writing skills.
- 14 Assessment procedures and tracking of progress is used well in Years 1 to 6 to target teaching and learning to identify where intervention is needed. Marking is used as a tool for assessment and pupils are given both praise for effort and ways in which to improve their work. However, teachers do not always follow up these comments and requests for completion of a further example sometimes go unheeded. Misspelling of key words often goes uncorrected and this does not support good progress in spelling. In the Foundation Stage a good range of formal assessment is used and some day-to-day progress is carefully noted. However, this is not always used to focus well on moving learning forward for individual children through planned interactions with adults.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good** and contributes well to the good achievement of all pupils. Children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception children) experience a satisfactory curriculum covering all areas of learning, whilst pupils in Years 1 to 6 enjoy a broad and rich curriculum. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. They are good in Years 1 to 6, but unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth and richness of curricular opportunities, particularly through opportunities to participate in sport, the arts and residential educational visits, is helping all pupils in Years 1 to 6 to achieve well.
- The commitment to care and provision for all, including pupils with special educational needs and the higher-attaining pupils, is a key feature of the provision.

- Accommodation and resources are insufficient to provide all the required learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Good provision for personal, social and health education boosts confidence and self-esteem so contributing to pupils' good achievement and preparing them well for the next stage in their education.
- Not enough attention is paid to planning opportunities to use literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across subjects.

Commentary

- 15 The school has tackled weaknesses identified in the curriculum in the previous report with considerable success. The improved provision for science, particularly focusing on developing pupils' investigative skills, is leading to higher standards, notably in Years 1 and 2. The school recognises that the focus on investigation skills in science and mathematics is one that still needs further development in order to foster pupils' problem-solving skills and their ability to think for themselves. The good arrangements for fostering pupils' personal, social and health education through a structured programme of lessons are supported well by teaching in religious education, physical education, science and during acts of collective worship. This is another improvement since the previous inspection. All staff work hard to promote this aspect of the curriculum effectively. There is appropriate provision for sex education and teaching about the misuse of drugs and alcohol.
- 16 All requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met and enhanced by a wide range of educational opportunities. This results in a curriculum that has good breadth and balance and is enriched well through visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Residential educational visits make a good contribution to the curriculum and particularly to personal, social and health education. The exception is in the Nursery where the curriculum is satisfactory. Here, there is sometimes over-direction at the expense of creativity and imagination or opportunities are missed to develop the activity that children choose for themselves, particularly to maximise the opportunities for mathematical and language and vocabulary development.
- 17 The confidence and positive attitudes to school of all pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs, are promoted through personal and social education, and enable all pupils to achieve well. This, together with good transfer arrangements with the local secondary school for pupils towards the end of Year 6, prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The school is very committed to include and provide for all pupils and is substantially successful. The school identifies those pupils who may have special educational needs or are higher-attaining pupils, and makes good provision for them. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are structured well and are better than they were at the previous inspection. Teachers and learning support assistants provide good support.
- 18 The school's recent priority has been to plan a curriculum that would foster confidence and self-esteem and so lead to higher standards. This has been effective. The school recognises in its development planning that more structured planning of opportunities to use and develop skills learned in English, mathematics and information and communication technology is needed in order to raise achievement and attainment in all subjects and to make best use of time. The school has made a start on this through its focus on developing speaking and listening skills.
- 19 The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Accommodation in the Nursery is satisfactory but the room is small and not planned well enough to allow all desirable experiences to be available each day and the outside area needs some attention. Accommodation and resources for physical education are limited but the links with another school go a

considerable way to remedying this. Resources are good overall but unsatisfactory in the Nursery, where provision for outdoor work is weak. Some normally expected resources, such as large construction blocks, are not available and many resources are old-fashioned and worn. There is a sufficient number of teachers with good subject knowledge, backed up by learning support assistants, who make a good contribution to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **good** provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with **good** support and guidance and has **good** measures in place to involve them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships throughout the school help pupils to feel safe and secure.
- The school places a strong emphasis on the welfare and care of pupils and has good systems in place to support this.
- Pupils' views are valued and considered, ensuring that they have some involvement in whole school issues.

Commentary

- 20 The school provides a safe and secure environment that enables all pupils to learn well. Parents appreciate the care and concern shown by staff and know that the wellbeing of their children is seen as a priority. Parents of Nursery children are particularly pleased with this aspect of the school. The headteacher and class teachers know pupils well, are aware of their personal circumstances and are sensitive to their individual needs.
- 21 Procedures to support the health, safety and protection of pupils are in place and effectively managed by experienced members of staff. Safe procedures are observed and health issues are dealt with effectively in lessons. Pupils are aware of the need to eat a healthy diet and healthy living is promoted well. Although the school makes regular checks of the building and grounds to identify potential safety risks and staff are vigilant in the supervision of pupils, there are a few issues awaiting attention.
- 22 A school council has recently been set up to give pupils more opportunity to be involved in the school's work and development. All age groups are represented and the views of all pupils are canvassed. Although this initiative is relatively new, there have already been some proposals that have resulted in some changes, including the introduction of a 'buddy' system in the playground. Older pupils respond well to this chance to take responsibility and show initiative.
- 23 The school reviews the progress of pupils with special educational needs very carefully. Special needs assistants make a good contribution to these discussions. Individual education plans highlight key areas for improvement for pupils with relevant and precise targets. Good support is also provided through the school's use of expertise in behaviour management. All pupils know what their learning targets are and the progress they are making towards them. The requirements of the statement of special educational needs for pupils with the highest level of special educational needs are fully met. Small classes and the good assessment and

tracking procedures mean that teachers know pupils well both academically and in their personal and social development. This supports significantly the improvements in pupils' academic and personal development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents and the community. Links with other schools are also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are pleased with all aspects of the school and feel that it has improved greatly since the previous inspection.
- The school provides a good level of information for parents and works hard to involve them in the education of their children but the response of some parents is limited.
- The school's good links with the community help to broaden the experiences of pupils.
- Links with the local secondary school are good both in the transfer of pupils and in the sharing of facilities and expertise.

Commentary

- 24 The school has made many improvements in the partnership with parents, and parents are appreciative. The views of parents are much more positive than at the time of the previous inspection. They feel that the school has moved forward in many ways saying, for example, "It has come on in leaps and bounds". There are now no areas in which parents have expressed major concerns. They are particularly positive about the teaching, the activities provided and the progress made by pupils. All parents who expressed a view feel that their children enjoy coming to school, and have every confidence in the leadership of the school.
- 25 The information provided for parents has improved since the previous inspection. Information about the school is comprehensive and parents are kept up to date with pupils' progress by regular consultations, and in a useful annual written report. The school has made good efforts to provide parents with more information about the work that their children do and to provide them with guidance on how to help, but these efforts have not been wholly successful due to the lack of response from some parents. Parents do support their children by listening to them read and ensuring that homework is completed. The homework policy has been made clear to parents. Homework diaries and reading records provide parents with a good means of communication with school.
- 26 The school ensures that parents are kept well informed and are contacted as soon as possible when possible special educational needs are identified. Parents are also invited to meetings when the individual education plans and statements are reviewed so that they know what progress has been made, discuss what the next targets are and how they may help their children at home. To foster this, parents have their own copy of the individual education plans. Parents are appreciative of the help provided by the school.
- 27 The school uses the local and wider community well to help to broaden the experiences of pupils and to contribute well to their personal development. There is regular input from the police, fire service and health professionals. Beamish

Museum provides a very useful resource and pupils take part in its annual Victorian Sports Day. The local allotment association provide help with the school garden and the school hosts a local carers and toddlers group.

- 28 The liaison between the school and the local secondary school is effective, with appropriate arrangements for the transfer of pupils. Teachers also have good working relationships with staff in the secondary school that have resulted in the sharing of facilities and staff expertise, especially in physical education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. Governance is **good**. All legal responsibilities are met. The actions taken by the school help to raise standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quiet, determined leadership of the headteacher, supported well by his assistant, ensures that all staff work well as a team to motivate all pupils and so help to raise standards.
- The school's thorough self-evaluation enables it to identify and provide well for the professional development of staff.
- The school's very strong commitment to including all pupils in all curricular and other opportunities helps all pupils to achieve well.
- The leadership of the curriculum by the headteacher and other key staff links closely to the school's aims to foster self-esteem and confidence.
- Good financial management supports the identified priorities well and helps to improve provision.
- The governing body understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and helps to ensure that spending matches the identified priorities to raise standards.

Particular aids or barriers to raising achievement

The school has created a positive learning environment, particularly in Years 1 to 6. This, together with a committed and hardworking staff who focus on raising attainment, ensures that all know that improvement is achievable. However, the expectations of some parents are low. The school is trying to overcome this by arranging workshops. The mobility factor, particularly in Years 3 to 6, hinders the raising of attainment in terms of the national test results at the end of Year 6.

Commentary

- 29 The sense of purpose and quiet determination of the headteacher, supported well by staff, to interest, motivate and foster the confidence and self-esteem of every pupil, are important factors of the good leadership. The headteacher leads by example and has created a team with similar aspirations and a sense of purpose. The school's policies, planning and teaching indicate a real concern to include all pupils and, in this, the school succeeds very well. This is reflected in the classrooms by the good provision for pupils with special educational needs, the identification of those pupils who may be gifted or talented and lesson plans that match challenging tasks to pupils' prior attainment.

- 30 Staff are deployed so that the school gains from their strengths. For example, the opportunity to employ a teacher as part of the National Primary Behaviour Strategy, in recognition of the number of pupils with challenging behaviour in Years 5 and 6, has meant that there are now two small classes for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This has had a pronounced beneficial effect on the attitudes and behaviour of these pupils. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has high aspirations and a good sense of purpose. Strategies identified to evaluate and improve the provision for these pupils indicate good leadership and management. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils.
- 31 The main points for action from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully with the exception of raising attainment in science by the end of Year 6. Standards in English and mathematics have risen in Years 2 and 6. Standards in science have risen significantly in Year 2 and standards in science in Year 6 are now better than they were in the national tests in 2004. The classes are more effectively organised and better meet the needs of all pupils, though there is room for better organisation in the Nursery. The most significant improvement is in the behaviour of pupils. This is now good overall and there are examples of very good behaviour in class. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning and so enables all pupils to achieve well.
- 32 The school's self-evaluation, including the analysis of national and optional tests, is thorough and realistic and closely linked to the rise in standards. This information enables the school to identify areas for inclusion in the school development plan effectively. The strategies to improve standards in writing, by focusing on fostering the speaking and listening skills of all pupils, exemplify this. The school's self-evaluation is also closely linked to a thorough review of teachers' performance, and target setting that improves pupils' performance by focusing on improvements in teaching. The resulting provision for the professional development of staff is good and is helping to raise attainment.
- 33 The governing body fulfils its role well. It knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well and so is able to make a good contribution to shaping the direction of the school. For example, the governing body was instrumental in seeking additional support from the educational psychologist. When taking decisions, close attention is paid to 'Best Value' principles. Spending decisions are carefully considered and the effectiveness of improved resources is monitored, such as those for information and communication technology. The special educational needs governor, the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the headteacher keep the governing body well informed about the provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- 34 The income for the year 2003-4 is only marginally higher than for similar schools nationally. This means that when spending, attainment on entry and the achievement of pupils is considered, the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	245,806	Balance from previous year	6,944
Total expenditure	237,662	Balance carried forward to the next	16,579
Expenditure per pupil	3,034		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children enter the Nursery with overall prior attainment that is well below average, although all levels are represented. Skills in communication, language and literacy are particularly low. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The number of children entering the Reception class is very small (three this year) as the Nursery serves families from outside the immediate area of the school. Most children leave at the end of the Nursery year to join schools in their own area. The general pattern is that most of these children transferring elsewhere are average and higher-attaining children. The school makes adequate provision for the Reception children who spend part of their time in the class with pupils in Years 1 and 2 and part in the Nursery. These children make good progress in the direct teaching sessions but are unlikely to attain the nationally expected early learning goals this year. The level of prior attainment and the numbers of children entering the Reception class varies from year to year, making year-on-year comparisons unsound. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in all six areas of learning. There is some good teaching of whole class and small groups. The school is well aware of the latest national guidance for this stage of learning and has overall planning that reflects this. Shortcomings in teaching lie in the organisation and management of the Nursery classroom to maximise the learning opportunities of every activity. All resources are not readily available to children and the teacher limits the choice by putting out a few activities each day. This makes it difficult for children to sustain an ongoing interest in an activity and to take learning forward each day. At the time of the inspection a relief Nursery Nurse made a satisfactory contribution to learning. Resources within the classroom are often old and outdated and there are some games and puzzles with too little learning potential to be useful. The school lacks some normally expected resources such as large blocks. The school has acknowledged in its development planning the need for work on the outdoor area both in terms of the area itself and in the resources.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Nursery is warm and caring and children feel safe and secure.
- Independence in learning is not well developed because of the organisation of the classroom and activities that are over-directed by the adults.

Commentary

35 The Nursery generates a warm and pleasant atmosphere where children are happy and settled. They sit quietly at tables to drink milk and eat pieces of fruit, although no choice is given. They are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you'. They learn to take turns and relate to adults when playing board games with the teacher. Children are not as independent in their learning as they should be for their age because the opportunities for them to choose and sustain concentration in developing an activity are inhibited by the classroom organisation. There are some

opportunities for children to learn about other cultures through topics such as 'Chinese New Year'. Overall, children are below the expected levels for their age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make satisfactory progress because of the good direct teaching.
- There are missed opportunities in the Nursery for developing skills.
- The use and development of early writing skills is an acknowledged training need.

Commentary

- 36 Teaching and learning are best when children are working in adult-led whole class or small group sessions. In a good session in the Nursery, children shared a large book with the teacher. The teacher invited children to predict the story from the pictures and then read the story. The questions asked and the story ensured that all children participated, so fostering an interest in books. The discussion about a Russian doll widened horizons and developed the language of size. A good session for children in the Reception year took place when the teacher used a 'guessing bag' and children chose objects that were subsequently related to the story. They managed, with help, to identify the objects and learned the associated vocabulary. In another session children were satisfactorily introduced to the sound of 's' at the beginning of words and could make some suggestions of words that begin with this. These children have low vocabulary skills for their age and sentence structure is immature.
- 37 There are not enough exciting opportunities to encourage children to write and the development of early writing skills is an acknowledged area for further development in the Nursery. Overall, children make satisfactory progress, particularly because of the good direct teaching but more informal opportunities for speaking, listening and writing are not always used to the full. The children in the Reception year are unlikely to attain the nationally expected learning goals by the end of the year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many missed opportunities in the Nursery to develop mathematical understanding from all activities.
- Direct teaching of number skills is effective.

Commentary

- 38 Children in both the Nursery and the Reception year learn well from direct teaching. In the Nursery children learn to count to six when playing board games with the teacher. Counting skills are reinforced through number songs and rhymes. Reception children worked with a teaching assistant and watched a short video recording about 'number 9'. They drew nine flowers and tried hard when copying '9'. There are many missed opportunities in the Nursery for mathematical

development through general Nursery activities, for example from a role-play area. Not all opportunities for mathematical understanding and vocabulary are taken from the activities in which children are engaged, although the teacher satisfactorily talked to children about the different shaped containers that they were working with in the sand tray. Children make satisfactory progress overall but Reception children are unlikely to reach the average standards for their age by the end of the Reception year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources for this area of learning are unsatisfactory.
- Topics feature strongly, providing good opportunities for direct teaching and learning but opportunities for children to initiate their own learning are too few.

Commentary

39 The Nursery works on the same topics as Reception and Years 1 and 2, and this is mainly achieved through whole class discussions. They learn something of past and present from a display of old and modern toys. There are interesting displays of autumn leaves and fruits for example, but little to engage children with these displays. Children use a variety of small construction kits to join and assemble models but the classroom does not have tools and materials for constructing with wood for example or an area where children can model with reclaimed materials. The class occasionally engages with visitors and visits and learns of other cultures through a topic about Chinese New Year, for example. Children in the Reception year take part in the history and geography topics with those in Years 1 and 2 but not in religious education lessons. Children make satisfactory progress but are unlikely to meet the national early learning goals for this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdoor resources are unsatisfactory.
- The specialist teaching of physical activity in the Reception year is very good.

Commentary

40 Children in both years have opportunities to use scissors and other small tools, and do so satisfactorily. Children in the Nursery satisfactorily piece together pieces of construction kits. Children in the Reception year demonstrated below average skills in cutting and rolling dough. In the Nursery, children have a soft play area to develop skills of large movement, although activity goes largely unsupported by adults. The outdoor area provides opportunities to ride bikes and scooters and to develop skills of balance. Children do this enthusiastically, but there are missed opportunities for adults to develop this activity into role-play or to develop skills systematically. The school acknowledges this outdoor aspect of learning as a key area for development in the Foundation Stage. When the Nursery class worked in the hall as a whole group, children played games such as *The Farmer's in his Den* and the *Hokey Cokey*. They enjoyed these games but there was little room for creative work. In the physical activity session in the hall for Reception children, taken by a visiting specialist teacher, the teaching was very good. Here the pace

was relentless and children were well supported in their task of making different body shapes by a series of pictures to help them. The small game at the end provided an appropriate element of competition but some children had difficulties identifying different colours. In this lesson children attained at the level expected of their age but overall are unlikely to reach all the objectives for this age by the end of the Reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for child-initiated imaginative and creative activity are too few for children to make progress in all aspects of creative development.
- Whole class sessions add well to learning.

Commentary

41 In the Nursery, painting, sticking and model making with construction kits provide satisfactory opportunities for creative development. Children satisfactorily paint with pre-mixed paint and take part in an adult-directed activity to decorate boxes with coloured and shiny paper. The lack of an interesting and engaging role-play area limits imaginative work. The 'small world' equipment is shabby. In a whole group session in the Nursery, teaching and learning were good when children sang and played instruments to accompany themselves. They know the words of a number of songs and the names of instruments such as bells and maracas. In this session children's skills were clearly in line with those expected for their age. However, because of the weakness in provision in other aspects of creative development and the low level of skills on entry, children are unlikely to reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception year in all aspects of creative development. Weaknesses in provision for creative development were raised in the previous report and the teacher is just beginning to address this issue.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, enabling them to reach expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The good quality of teaching enables all pupils to achieve well.
- The school makes good use of its detailed assessment systems in order to guide planning and to set targets for improvement.
- The subject is led and managed well and this ensures a consistent approach to teaching and learning.
- Marking often contains comments about what pupils have achieved and those that will take learning forward but the spelling of key words is not always corrected.
- The opportunities to promote English skills in other subjects are not fully utilised.

Commentary

42 Standards have risen since the previous inspection and pupils achieve well. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in reading is above average in Year 2. This is similar to

the results in the national tests in 2004. Standards in writing are average. This improvement on the 2004 national test results is due to differences between these very small year groups and the focus on improving speaking, listening and writing skills. Standards in Year 6 are average despite the number of pupils who have special educational needs in this year group. The standards are higher than in the 2004 national tests. This is because of the difference between these small year groups and the strategies implemented by the school to improve the teaching of English and so raise attainment, particularly of higher-attaining pupils. All pupils have good attitudes towards the subject and behave well at all times.

- 43 Pupils have well below average speaking and listening skills on entry to the school. In particular, the limited range of vocabulary is a weakness and this impinges on the quality of writing. The school has rightly identified the need to provide many opportunities for pupils to improve their listening skills and to extend the range of vocabulary in order to raise attainment. In all lessons teachers insist on pupils listening carefully to the teacher and to each other and this ensures that listening skills by the end of Years 2 and 6 are similar to those found nationally. Similarly, opportunities to extend the range of pupils' vocabulary are taken, as in a Years 3 and 4 literacy lesson, when pupils were introduced to words such as 'excavate' and 'archaeology'. As a result, pupils in Year 6 try to use interesting words and are keen to ask teachers what unfamiliar words such as 'slain' and 'impaled' mean when they come across them in reading. The focus on using interesting words and giving explanations in sentences means that pupils' speaking skills are similar to those expected nationally in Year 6, though slightly below them in Year 2. The school recognises that this initiative has potential for further development both in English and in other subjects.
- 44 Because teachers have good subject knowledge and teach basic skills well, pupils in Year 2 make good use of a range of strategies when they meet unfamiliar words, such as sounding letters and using pictures. Attainment in reading in Year 2 is above that expected nationally. Pupils in Year 6 use similar strategies but the higher and average-attaining pupils also refer to the meaning of text when they meet new or unfamiliar words. Pupils in Year 6 know how to use reference books when completing research. Higher and average-attaining pupils do so with confidence. When reading aloud, these pupils display an interest and enjoyment of books. Lower-attaining pupils are well supported in reading. A feature in the improved standards in reading is the school's provision of a wider range of texts to interest all pupils, so remedying a weakness identified in the previous report. This is coupled with the school's encouragement of regular reading at home.
- 45 During literacy lessons pupils are frequently challenged to write in a range of styles and are encouraged to choose and use words for effect. Pupils in Year 6 used well-chosen words and phrases that capture the interest of the reader. Sometimes there is a choice of writing task so that teachers ensure that both girls and boys are motivated by the task. As a result of the range of tasks and the strategies used by teachers to encourage pupils to use a wider range of vocabulary, standards in writing are rising and are average in Years 2 and 6.
- 46 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Sometimes teaching is very good. Key features of the good teaching that enable all pupils to achieve well, including those who have special educational needs and those who are higher-attainers, are the very detailed planning that reflects the high expectations that all teachers have of their pupils, tasks that are well-matched to prior attainment and the effective use of questions to check on the gains in learning made by all pupils. Where teaching is very good the pace is consistently brisk, tasks not only challenge but also motivate pupils highly so that they settle instantly to the task. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is even more closely focused on the targets in their individual education plans. All teachers make good use of well-chosen resources, and the new interactive whiteboards in two classrooms are already being put to good use to the benefit of all pupils. When present, learning support assistants make a

good contribution to learning. Pupils have specific individual targets for improvement and most pupils have a good understanding of their own learning, enhanced by the helpful and very focused comments teachers provide when they mark pupils' work. However, some key vocabulary is not always corrected and this does not help to improve spelling.

- 47 The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader has a strong sense of purpose with a firm commitment to raise standards further. He is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses because of the opportunities taken to check on teaching and learning and sampling pupils' work. The annual review of the subject, including a very thorough analysis of the results of national and optional tests, leads to strategies to raise attainment. The current focus on improving speaking and listening skills, drawing on expertise from the Community Opportunity Group Scheme, illustrates this well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 48 The school makes satisfactory, but often incidental, use of literacy in other subjects. This helps to extend pupils' literacy skills and deepen their understanding of other subjects. Pupils used their speaking and listening skills well in a science lesson in Years 1 and 2. In history, pupils in Years 3 and 4 write about the Ancient Greeks. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 read and record information when working with databases in information and communication technology lessons. The school recognises in its development planning that these opportunities need to be more securely planned and structured in order to support higher attainment in all subjects, including English, and to make pupils more independent in their learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and teachers are beginning to develop investigations and problem solving as an integral part of learning.
- Lessons are challenging and well matched to the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils are very confident in number but less so when they have to think for themselves and use and apply their knowledge in different contexts.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.

Commentary

- 49 Achievement is good. Standards have risen and inspection evidence indicates that standards are average in both Years 2 and 6. The school has been very successful in its efforts to improve standards. Standards in the national tests at the end of 2004 were average at the end of Year 2 and well below average at the end of Year 6. In this year group two pupils missed gaining the average Level 4 by one mark and one pupil missed Level 5 by one mark. In a very small year group such as this, each pupil counts for a large percentage. This factor, and the number of pupils with special educational needs, made a significant difference to the overall grade. Standards have risen because last year the subject leader taught all the mathematics in Years 3 to 6, giving her good oversight of development needs of the subject. The support of a teaching assistant in Years 5 and 6 gave the teacher time

to concentrate on boosting attainment in Year 6 by addressing problems and raising expectations and the confidence of the pupils taking the tests. This year the school also has the benefit of a leading mathematics teacher to teach Years 5 and 6 as part of a special project. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are confident in number. Pupils in Year 6 recalled multiplication facts swiftly and understand square numbers. In Year 2 they competently counted in 2s, 5s, and 10s and doubled numbers in line with expectations. In Years 3 to 4 pupils had some difficulty in turning written problems into mathematical operations although they could clearly do the arithmetic. This was despite the good teaching and the careful explanations of the teacher. They found it hard to use and apply their skills in this way. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 tackled a mathematics investigation requiring them to generalise and predict patterns in number. They found this hard although the lesson was very good. The school has recognised that more work needs to be done in teaching pupils to use and apply their skills in mathematics and has begun to invest much effort into furthering this approach. The effect of this on attainment is still not fully developed although pupils in Years 1 to 2 are developing thinking skills well that enable them to solve problems. This is because the teacher constantly emphasises such questions as 'How did you do that?'

- 50 The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Strengths in Years 1 and 2 include teaching pupils how to solve problems and the use of challenging and correct mathematical vocabulary. In the lessons seen expectations were high and pupils rose to the challenge, demonstrating very good behaviour and trustworthiness when working independently. Work was well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils and pupils in Year 2 were well able to collect data and begin to structure a graph. One pupil used the computer to do this, contributing to the development of information and communication technology skills. In Years 3 to 6 the opening oral and mental arithmetic sessions contribute very well to the revision and consolidation of number facts. The pace of this session was relentless in Years 5 and 6 and pupils enjoyed the challenge of beating a pendulum with increasing speed. Also in this lesson pupils were skilfully led through generating the first three terms of a sequence of dots into working out the hundredth term through formulating a rule. Although pupils were not well practised in mathematical investigation, the teacher's very penetrating questioning and probing made them think for themselves. Most eventually understood and could apply their skill to other examples, with the higher-attainers being able to describe rules generated orally and write a formula. Demands were very high in this lesson and the activity worked very well at different levels to meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Pupils worked very hard and achievement was very high. Pupils with recognised emotional and behavioural difficulties were managed very well. Pupils with special educational needs were very well supported by a teaching assistant.
- 51 Marking is well focused on helping pupils understand what they need to do to improve but instructions are not always followed up. Spelling errors go uncorrected and this does not support well the school's drive to improve spelling. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning when working with groups, and particularly for those pupils with special educational needs, but in whole class sessions they do not always take a sufficiently active part, for example in assessing and recording response.

- 52 The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader understands well the need to raise standards further by building in and developing investigation and problem-solving activities, and is currently developing a bank of resources to support this. She has rightly identified the need to plan more opportunities for using and applying mathematics in other subjects and this is part of the school's development planning. The subject leader observes lessons in other classes and checks planning. She updates her own skills and has a good overview of the needs of the subject. Assessment, record keeping and tracking of pupils' progress ensure that work is well focused and that intervention efforts are appropriate and well timed. Homework now has a useful place in learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 53 No examples of mathematics across the curriculum were observed during the inspection except in information and communication technology where pupils in Years 5 and 6 created databases. However, the school has acknowledged in its development planning that this is an area for further development because this aspect of teaching and learning is not securely planned and integrated into the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well to attain above average standards in Year 2.
- Consistently good teaching enables all pupils to make good gains in their learning.
- Good behaviour and positive attitudes of pupils to science foster learning well.
- The subject is led and managed well and this contributes to the rise in standards.
- Good assessment procedures inform planning well.
- Standards in Year 6 are below those expected nationally.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to plan their own investigations.
- Marking is satisfactory but does not help pupils often enough to know what they have achieved or take their learning forward.
- The planned use of skills learned in information and communication technology is not sufficiently incorporated into teaching.

Commentary

- 54 Standards in science in Year 2 have improved since the previous inspection and are now above average, so pupils achieve very well. Standards in Year 6 remain below average because pupils joining the school very recently are, overall, below the standards expected nationally. Those pupils who have been in the school since Year 2 attain similar standards to those expected nationally, even though several of these are pupils who have special educational needs, so this group of pupils achieves well. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are above average in Year 2 because, in the very small numbers in the year group, one pupil has already attained the expected Level 2 and is beginning to work in the higher Level 3, whilst two other pupils are working well into Level 2. This is because the school has remedied a weakness identified in the previous report by ensuring pupils have more opportunities to foster their investigation skills. The difference between the standards of work seen in Year 2 and Year 6 and the results of the national tests in 2004 reflects the difference between the very small groups of pupils and reflecting particularly the mobility in Years 5 and 6. These pupils have only recently had the benefit of the school's improving approach to the teaching of investigation and problem solving skills. The school has identified a need to focus on helping pupils to attain the higher Level 5 by further development of these skills.
- 55 The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and makes a good contribution to the achievement of pupils. Another very important factor is the focus on teaching the skills of scientific enquiry, a weakness identified in the previous report. This was exemplified well in lessons with pupils in all classes. Although the pupils in Years 5 and 6 had been closely involved in planning their investigation rather than being directed by the teacher, the work seen in the books of pupils in Years 3 to 6 indicated that such opportunities are not given often enough. Other features of the good teaching are the good planning and the match of tasks to prior learning. Pupils are challenged to explain their thinking and this reflects the high expectations that teachers have of pupils. The use of questions to review previous learning and the help given to

lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are also supportive features. The interesting and challenging investigation activities, often involving working in small groups, foster pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject and pupils behave well. Collaborating with others in groups also fosters personal and social development well, shown when pupils in a Years 3 and 4 class were challenged to devise and improve a simple switch mechanism and explain their system to the class.

- 56 Marking is satisfactory overall and the best marking includes comments that take learning forward. However, such comments are too few. Also, although teachers use scientific vocabulary well in lessons and ensure that pupils see how to spell these words, incorrect spelling is not corrected often enough. Pupils learn to use digital microscopes and sometimes use information and communication technology to produce graphs, but there is a need for more planned use of skills learned in information and communication technology in science.
- 57 The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader has high aspirations and is determined to help all pupils achieve as highly as possible. With this in mind, in addition to checking on planning and samples of work, there is now provision for checking the quality of teaching and learning and taking action as a result of this. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection. The very careful analysis of national test results and the on-going assessment of learning in lessons are used well to inform planning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning, and the confidence and enthusiasm of pupils, enable all to achieve well.
- Good resources, used effectively by teachers, promote learning well.
- Assessment booklets are well established in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6; portfolios of work are evident in Years 1 and 2 but need development in Years 3 to 6.
- Use of information and communication technology to promote learning across the curriculum is growing but is insufficiently structured.

Commentary

- 58 Standards in this subject are similar to those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6 and all pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, particularly so since the range of information and communication technology provision for pupils has increased. The skills and confidence of the teachers has grown and planning takes account of prior attainment as a result of professional development.
- 59 On the evidence of teaching seen, analysis of work in folders, displays of work and discussion with pupils, teaching and learning are judged to be good overall. The hallmarks of the good teaching are the confidence of the teachers and the sharing of learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of the lesson so that all pupils understand what they

should know or be able to do by the end of the lesson. The use of the newly installed interactive whiteboards in two classrooms for information and communication technology and other subjects exemplifies the confidence and determination of teachers well. Other strengths of the teaching that enable all pupils to achieve well are the interesting tasks arranged, teachers' high expectations and the good use of questioning to check on pupils' learning or to draw on their ideas. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well in their learning, particularly when another adult is present. The opportunity to choose their own themes for database work, to work in pairs and to take turns fosters personal and social development well. In lessons where pupils had the opportunity to work with computers and from discussion with older pupils, the interest of the pupils was very evident, and this makes a good contribution to their achievement. The planned use of information and communication technology in and for other subjects is in its infancy. Teachers know that this is an area of development to improve their teaching and to strengthen learning in all subjects.

- 60 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader is clear about the progress being made, particularly in Years 1 and 2, where assessment booklets and portfolios of work are used effectively to record progress in relation to nationally expected levels of attainment. She is also clear about the areas that need to be improved. Planning, samples of work and the displays are checked and she has observed pupils completing tasks in lessons.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 61 There is evidence of a growing use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. For example, there was reference to a website about quilt making alongside a display of 'quilt collages' as part of work in art and design. Pupils also described with enthusiasm how they had researched Anglo Saxons for work in history. A higher-attaining pupil in Year 2 confidently used a program to complete a task in a literacy lesson and printed out the completed work. Digital photography is used to foster learning, for example when pupils acted out the story of Rama and Sita in religious education. The school recognises that the use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects is still insufficiently structured and embedded into the planning in order raise attainment further.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning and enthusiastic leadership and management have ensured an improved curriculum and enhanced teachers' skills.
- Pupils are interested and learn well.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to learn from experience in the classroom but there are few opportunities for them to experience visits to places of worship and visitors from world faiths other than Christianity.

Commentary

- 62 Pupils achieve well and standards are in line with those normally found in Years 2 and 6. The subject meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There has been considerable improvement since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils study Christianity and other main world faiths through an effective theme approach, for example learning about *Holy Books* or *Special Places of Worship*. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 created cards and rangoli patterns as part of their work on Hinduism. In Years 3 to 4, a display sequencing the story of Rama and Sita and a good display of objects of religious significance from the same faith contribute well to understanding.
- 63 Teaching and learning are good overall. In the very good lesson observed in Years 5 and 6, pupils demonstrated a good understanding and recall of the symbols called the Five Ks of Sikhism. They watched and listened well to the video recording about Sikh family life and the gurdwara, and this made a good contribution to the development of literacy skills as they made notes to help with their later writing. The highlight of the lesson was the sharing of Sikh vegetarian food, providing a very good example of learning through experience. These pupils have a greater knowledge and understanding than they are able to express in writing. The lesson for Years 1 and 2 also provided many practical experiences through listening and talking. The atmosphere for quiet reflection was very well set by the teacher who used a 'singing bowl' to create calm and peace. Pupils listened to a poem about beauty, and reflected and shared their ideas. Despite their difficulties with vocabulary and sentence structure they offered good suggestions and related this to ideas about how they could keep the school and its surroundings nice. The teacher skilfully introduced the concept and meaning of 'promise' and pupils wrote and shared their promise about care for the world either individually or with help. Both lessons made very good contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 64 The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and takes the trouble to attend many courses and pass on the skills learned to others. Resources are very good and the school now has its own collection of objects of religious significance and video recordings. The opportunities for visits and visitors linked with world faiths are still limited but the school is now exploring this as a next step. The school has good links with local Christian communities. The potential of the new interactive white boards to provide virtual tours of buildings, for example, is also an acknowledged area for development. Planning is very good and the school has a simple but effective method of assessment and record keeping.

History and geography

- 65 No judgements have been made about these subjects as time did not allow lessons to be observed. Planning and displays indicate that National Curriculum requirements are met. The school has good links with the local museum. There are good links with other subjects, for example with art and design as part of a topic on Ancient Greece. Geographical skills in Years 1 and 2 are supported by the ongoing topic *Where in the world is Barnaby Bear?* and maps of the world to identify from where we get different foods. In this class, pupils study toys old and new and learn

to appreciate how things change over time. All these learning opportunities make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Commentary

Art and design

66 No lessons were observed so no judgements can be made on teaching, learning and attainment. There is a good range of well-displayed work showing clear progression in skills and understanding, with a broad range of experiences. The full requirements of the National Curriculum are met, including fabric and three-dimensional work, showing improvement since the previous inspection. The experiences support pupils' cultural development, for example when painting in the style of Monet. The paintings of Ancient Greek terra cotta vases exemplified how work in this subject is used to support learning in other subjects. Pupils use a program on the computer to design and paint and younger pupils produce work showing good purpose and control.

Design and technology

67 There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision or attainment as no lessons were observed. School documentation and Years 1 and 2 design and technology assessment booklets confirm that the principles of teaching the subject are in place and National Curriculum requirements are met.

Music

68 There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the overall quality of the provision, standards or teaching and learning because it was not possible to observe any lessons. Pupils sing well in assembly. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to extend their skills through carol services and musical productions. In these productions, pupils perform for their peers and their parents and this fosters their confidence and self-esteem well. They also have the opportunity to learn a brass instrument through the peripatetic teaching service. Experiences such as these enrich the curriculum and support well the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Physical education

69 No lessons were observed so no judgement can be made on teaching, learning and attainment. National Curriculum requirements are met. The school is aware of the importance of physical education. This has led to good links with the local secondary school. Teachers from this school teach pupils in Years 1 to 2 and in Years 3 to 6 for at least one term per year. This provides a good opportunity for the class teacher to observe a teacher with specific expertise and so enhance their own teaching skills. Older pupils have some lessons in the local secondary school because of the limited size of their own school hall and the limited range of equipment. The school also draws on outside experts to teach ball skills to the older pupils. Pupils compete against others in football and participate in local sports festivals such as a Victorian Sports Day organised by the local museum. An after-school games club provides further experiences for older pupils. These opportunities support the personal, social and cultural development of pupils well. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have weekly swimming sessions and most swim at least twenty-five metres.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Commentary

- 70 No judgements have been made on provision because only one lesson was observed. There is a clear and well-organised programme for personal, social and health education. Weekly 'circle time' (a time when pupils sit and discuss issues of personal development) is supported by good resources and assessment. Sex education and drugs awareness education are an integral part of the personal, social and health education curriculum. There are good contributions from the school nurse, the police, the river authority and when pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit a 'Safety Carousel'. All staff work hard to promote this aspect of the curriculum effectively. In the one lesson observed in Years 3 and 4, teaching and learning were good and most pupils were able to think about people who were special to them and why. Some were able to discuss why people loved them. The teacher had good relationships with the class and generated an appropriate and secure atmosphere for the discussion.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
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).