

INSPECTION REPORT

BLUE COAT C OF E (AIDED) JUNIOR SCHOOL

Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114274

Headteacher: Mrs G A Gleghorn

Lead inspector: Mrs L P A Clark

Dates of inspection: 6th-8th June 2005

Inspection number: 266447

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	216
School address:	Langley Road Newton Hall Estate Durham
Postcode:	DH1 5LP
Telephone number:	0191 3865975
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M J Murray
Date of previous inspection:	30 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average-sized junior school. Nearly all pupils are of white ethnic backgrounds. A very small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about 8 per cent, which is below average. The school serves a socially and economically above average area. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average. Thirty-one pupils are on the list of special educational needs, which is below average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Most of the pupils receiving additional help have specific learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech or communication difficulties, hearing, physical or visual impairment. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is about average. The school gained the Basic Skills Award and School Improvement Award in 2003, the Healthy School Award, an Activemark and Naacemark in 2004 and became an Investor in People in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good and improving school where pupils are happy and want to be. The climate for learning is excellent and pupils are highly valued. Standards of the present Year 6 are high. Pupils' achievement is good. The quality of teaching is good. The school is led and managed very well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher
- Well above average standards by the end of Year 6
- Standards higher in writing than in reading
- Very good personal development of pupils with a strong emphasis on healthy living
- Very good relationships between adults and pupils
- Outstanding enrichment of a very good curriculum
- Missed opportunities to share the very good teaching evident in subject leaders' teaching
- Limited opportunities for pupils' independent learning in a minority of lessons
- Mathematics under-used in other subjects

Improvement is very good since the last inspection in November 1998. Pupils' achievement is now good. Standards have improved significantly. The issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed very well. Procedures for checking pupils' progress are now good. The governance of the school is now very good. There are no real barriers to learning; significant aids are pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	A*	C	E
Mathematics	A	A	C	D
Science	A	A	C	D

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

Achievement is good, including that of pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils. Boys and girls do equally well. Standards of the present group of pupils in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science as they have been over the past five years with the exception of last year when pupils did not perform as well as expected. This was mainly due to staffing difficulties at the time. Although the majority met nationally expected levels, fewer than usual exceeded those expected of their age. Standards in reading are above rather than well above average, as they are in writing, speaking and listening, because of the limited time given to developing pupils' reading skills in the Year 6 classes. Standards in ICT are above average, indicating very good achievement by pupils in the current Year 6 whose skills were below average when they joined in Year 3. Standards in PE are high, reflecting the school's passionate interest in a wide range of sports. No judgements on standards could be made in other subjects.

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good and leads to pupils' good achievement. **The quality of teaching and learning is good** throughout the school. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good in English, mathematics and science and very good in ICT and PE. A substantial proportion of teaching has very good features: these include vitality, pace and high standards of organisation. In these lessons, learning is most effective. Pupils have limited opportunities to use their initiative and to make independent choices in their learning in some lessons. No judgements were made on the quality of teaching in other subjects. Literacy and ICT skills are developed and used well across the curriculum; the skills of mathematics are under-used in other subjects. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress are good. The curriculum is very good and enriched exceptionally well. The accommodation and resources are good. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school provides pupils with very good support, advice and guidance and involves them well in its work and development. The partnership with parents is very good and there are satisfactory links with the community and good links with other local schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and she is assisted very well by subject co-ordinators. Recent leadership initiatives are having a most beneficial impact on pupils' learning and their personal development. Management is very good. The governance of the school is very good. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very well satisfied with the education the school provides for their children. Pupils really enjoy what the school has to offer and there is often the sound of laughter. Neither parents nor pupils have any significant concerns.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Enhance the quality of teaching and learning to reflect the best practice at the school
- Use mathematics more extensively in other subjects
- Improve the provision for reading for older pupils
- Give pupils consistent opportunities to use their initiative and to make independent choices in their learning

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are well above average in the current Year 6. Pupils' achievement, including of those pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards, by the end of Year 6, are well above average in English, mathematics, science and PE and above average in ICT
- Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection
- The demanding targets set to be achieved by the end of Year 6 are likely to be met in English and mathematics
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- The most able pupils achieve well

Commentary

1. Standards, of the present group of pupils in Year 6, are on course to be well above the national average in English, mathematics, science and PE and above average in ICT. As can be seen in the following table, in the 2004 national tests at the end of the Year 6, overall, average points scores were significantly lower than the previous years though in line with the national average; however, the overall average performance of pupils in the national test during the three-year period 2002 to 2004 was well above average in English, mathematics and science. The reason for the relatively weaker performance of pupils in 2004 has been analysed rigorously by the headteacher and the governors. They concluded that this group of pupils did not perform as well in the national tests as expected. In addition, staffing disruption and the school not being able to provide 'booster' classes because of financial and accommodation problems affected adversely pupils' performance. This year, it has been possible to run 'booster' groups and stability of staffing has been achieved.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7 (30.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.8 (28.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.1 (30.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 64 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Improvement since the last inspection in standards is very good. At that time too few pupils were achieving the higher than expected standards by the end of Year 6. This is no longer the case, as about half of the pupils reach the higher than expected standard in English, mathematics and science. The school sets very demanding targets for its pupils to be reached by the end of Year 6. In the 2004 national tests it fell short of its targets, particularly in English at the higher level. The targets for pupils to reach in 2005 are higher than the previous year and are likely to be met, including at the higher level. The trend in the school's results was a little above average until it dipped last year.
3. Pupils enter Year 3 with overall above average levels of attainment and make good progress. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good because pupils have very good attitudes to work and there is a high proportion of good or better teaching. In ICT standards are below average

on entry and pupils make very good gains in their learning to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. In PE, because of the excellent provision for the subject, pupils achieve highly and reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6.

- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans because of the excellent ethos for learning and the good quality of support they receive. Pupils who are identified as gifted or talented also achieve well and reach very high standards. Teachers are aware of the needs of both groups so that, in lessons and small group work, pupils are helped and encouraged. The achievement of boys and girls is similar.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Attendance is well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attendance is very good, responding well to the very high quality of education provided
- Relationships between adults and pupils are very relaxed and friendly and this forms the foundation of their work together
- Pupils' personal and social skills are very well developed
- The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Commentary

- Attendance is well above the national average. Parents are keen to ensure their children arrive punctually and attend school every day. But equally important, the school provides a very interesting and exciting curriculum, good lessons, excellent clubs and sporting activities which give pupils good reasons to want to come to school. It treats pupils responsibly, helps them succeed and listens to what they have to say. Attendance is very good because children want to be in school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.0	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

- Pupils have the confidence to share their ideas and thoughts and are quite comfortable to ask questions when they don't understand. They work well in pairs, as well as independently on a specific task. They particularly enjoy practical work, for example, in design technology or science. In a Year 6 art lesson, the pupils became completely engrossed as they used the computers to research Venetian masks, to help them complete their own. Pupils are self-motivated, they concentrate well and get on with the task in hand and are willing to show their work at the front of the class. They thoroughly enjoy learning, trust their teachers and are proud of their school. Behaviour in the playground is also very good. Pupils eat their lunches sociably and play together in a friendly way. They say they feel completely safe and there is very little about their school they would wish to change. There have been no exclusions in recent times.

7. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spirituality is very well promoted. Pupils know that assemblies are special times and behave accordingly. They focus on the lighted candle; they listen and think about the message of the story, reflecting on its meaning. They sing well and have told teachers what they like about assemblies and the kind of music they enjoy. In religious education lessons they think about the big questions – The Creation – how did it all begin? They write about their thoughts, for example, 'If I could ask Jesus a question, what would it be?' They think about themselves as others see them and write autobiographical pieces that show their self-awareness. Pupils think about the lives and feelings of others, for example, how the lack of an education for third world children affects their lives.
8. Moral understanding is also very well promoted. The school rules are very clear and are based upon respect for others' views and feelings. Pupils know and understand what is expected of them, responding accordingly, but nevertheless still enjoying the rewards for achievement, effort and good behaviour. They also think about moral issues arising in their lessons relating for example to Biblical stories, the treatment of child workers in the novels of Dickens, and the Second World War. In discussions with them, it is very clear that pupils know and understand what is right and what is wrong. Provision for pupils' social development is also very strong. Pupils are required to work together, share their ideas, play, behave and treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves. They are taught about healthy lifestyles, encouraged to make sensible choices when choosing meals and snacks, play sports and take exercise as often as possible; they understand the need to avoid dangers and stay safe on the roads. At appropriate times they are taught to understand the changes to their bodies which take place as they grow older. At all times they are expected to take some responsibility for their own learning by sharing their targets and working to achieve them. In Year 6 all pupils are expected to take up duties around the school, including manning the school's telephones at lunchtime.
9. The school gives pupils a very good understanding of their own local culture and the variety and richness of others. It is very evident that they understand the history of their own school and know about the Durham of three hundred years ago and can trace that through to today. In their religious studies they learn about the beliefs of Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, as well as Christianity and they understand that all of these faiths can be found in Britain today, sometimes close at hand. Particular efforts have been made to establish contacts with schools in New Zealand and China and this has led to projects and celebrations. Musicians from South Africa have visited the school; pupils learn French, write poetry and express themselves through dance. This is a particularly rich aspect of the curriculum.
10. This very good provision means that pupils are very well developed socially. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 they are articulate, mature and sensible and are very well able to move on to the next stage of their education.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment is good. The curriculum is very good with outstanding enrichment. Standards of care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Pupils' views are sought and acted upon well. Partnerships with parents are very good; links with the community are satisfactory and those with other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good as is assessment of pupils' work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school
- The teaching of literacy and ICT skills in other subjects is good; those in mathematics are under-used
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well
- The teaching of subject leaders is of a high standard
- In a small number of lessons pupils have too few opportunities to work on their own

Commentary

11. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils learn more effectively and standards are higher as a result. The following table shows clearly the strengths in the teaching with approximately half being very good or better. The excellent teaching was in Year 3 and in Year 6 in a French lesson taught by a visiting specialist from a local secondary school. Good teaching was seen in every year group. The teaching in Year 5 was consistently very good and some very good lessons were seen in Years 3 and 6. The school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning matches inspection findings exactly.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	7	7	1	0	0	0

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

12. Teaching and learning are good in English, mathematics and science. Strengths include: thorough preparation, good use of interactive whiteboards and high standards of organisation. Pupils are given many opportunities to work with a partner or in a group and assessments of each other's work are used very effectively to raise standards in writing. Teaching and learning in ICT and PE are very good, with a strong emphasis on developing skills. Literacy and ICT skills are taught well through other subjects but mathematical skills are under-used. The school recognises that this is an area for development and has suitable plans in place to include mathematics more widely.
13. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress. Staff know pupils well and make good use of the clear, manageable targets set out in individual education plans. There is close liaison between class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies so that continuity of education is ensured. The special educational needs teacher has a very good understanding of individual needs, assesses pupils thoroughly and provides good support in helping pupils to achieve their individual targets when supporting pupils in class or when they are withdrawn for special help. Teaching assistants are well used to support pupils in class and, for example, in the provision of support for pupils with movement difficulties so that co-ordination and confidence are improved.
14. It is a hallmark of the teaching that subject leaders invariably teach their own subjects very well. Across the range of subjects, the very good teaching is characterised by an energetic pace and full involvement of pupils who are encouraged to bounce ideas off a partner and then present their views and so play a full part in discussions. Where teaching and learning are excellent, the fast pace is matched by short bursts of intensive coaching engendering a corresponding liveliness and increasing accuracy in pupils' responses, when learning different French terms for types of weather, for example. Unsatisfactory elements in otherwise good or

satisfactory lessons include a rather over-directive approach and limited opportunities for pupils to work independently or to make independent choices. Assessment is good and particularly strong in English where pupils are given very good opportunities to assess each other's work.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good. It is very broad and very rich. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The rich and varied provision for extra-curricular activities, including sports, is outstanding
- The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and opportunity to succeed
- Accommodation and resources meet the needs of pupils well
- Preparation for the next stages in education is very good

Commentary

15. A very large proportion of pupils participate in the very wide range of extra-curricular activities designed to enrich the curriculum. These include hockey, football, performing arts, pottery, dance, handbells, choir, recorder, Spanish and fencing. The curriculum is very well balanced between opportunities for pupils to extend their sporting and practical skills and the more academic work, including French in Year 6, which enables them to receive a very well rounded education. The school also ensures that learning is enjoyable and exciting so that pupils are well motivated. For example they experience, 'hip hop' dancing, engage in circus skills and take part in gospel singing and African drumming and visit many different places such as Bede's World, the Stadium of Light, the local police headquarters and the Oriental Museum. Pupils in Year 6 make a residential visit to Scotland, where they learn about teamwork, living together and participate in outdoor activities. The curriculum is further supported by visitors to school who help to deepen understanding. Local clergy come regularly into school to take worship and the school welcomes visitors such as, engineers, theatre groups, musicians, a Russian teacher and foreign students. A further source of curriculum enrichment lies in the international links being forged by the school. Staff educational visits to such places as Russia, New Zealand and China have led to an increasing international dimension to the curriculum. For example, pupils communicate by Internet and website with pupils in China, New Zealand and Hong Kong. They also communicate with former pupils in Australia and the United States. This helps to extend their geographical and ICT skills and their understanding of international issues such as pollution, a problem which they share with the pupils in the other countries.
16. All pupils, whatever their abilities, have equal opportunities to thrive and to do well. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well because their needs are identified and the school ensures that they are challenged and have opportunities to extend their skills. For example, they are invited to participate in Latin and science clubs at local secondary schools. The school is very careful to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have equal access to the curriculum and opportunity to succeed. Individual education plans are clearly written and have manageable targets for improvement. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and class teachers ensure that pupils, parents, teaching assistants and outside agencies work well together to meet pupils' needs effectively. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the life of the school. For example, they are elected to the school council and take part in sporting and musical activities enthusiastically. The school is particularly careful to ensure that there is very close liaison with secondary schools when pupils with special educational are transferred.

17. The skills of teachers are well matched to the needs of the school. Teachers are well supported by teaching assistants, particularly in work with pupils with special educational needs. Resources are good and are readily accessible to pupils and teachers. The accommodation is generally very spacious and enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work and by the care and attention given to ensuring that the school is well maintained, very bright, clean and welcoming.
18. The school maintains very close links with the local secondary school so that the transition to the next stage of education is usually a very smooth one. Staff meet regularly in order to exchange information and pupils have many opportunities for visiting their new schools before transfer. Former pupils visit to make PowerPoint presentations about life at the secondary school. The school ensures that the records of all pupils are passed on, particularly those for pupils with special educational needs. Through the school coordinator scheme the school receives expert support in PE and pupils engage on projects in English, science and mathematics which are continued at the secondary school in order to help continuity of learning. The curriculum is very carefully planned so that pupils build securely on previous work. Following a review of its provision the school is engaged in developing its planning so that where appropriate, the links between subjects are further extended, helping pupils to see a purpose and relevance in their learning and extend their skills.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. The school ensures the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils well. The school seeks, values and acts on pupils' views well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for health, safety, care and welfare are very well organised
- The school supports and helps pupils to achieve well
- The school involves pupils well in their learning and decisions about school life in general

Commentary

19. Procedures for health, safety and welfare are very well planned and managed by the headteacher. There are regular site inspections with governors and the site supervisor and results are reported to the governing body. Risk assessments are well organised and cover activities in school as well as outside educational visits. The very good management of health and safety ensures that both pupils and staff work in a safe and secure environment. Procedures for child protection are also very well organised. Pupils are taught the importance of healthy lifestyles, encouraged to eat healthily and participate fully in high levels of exercise and sport. During the summer of 2004 the school achieved the Healthy Schools Award, indicating success in this area of the curriculum.
20. Pupils are supported well throughout their time in school and this has improved since the last inspection. When children join the school initially, they and their parents have a number of visits to prepare them for the move up to the junior school. Teachers from Year 3 visit the infant school to get to know the children and understand their special needs, their levels of attainment and their friendship groups. There is a 'moving up' day when the children can see their new classrooms and try out new lessons. As well as these formal procedures, all pupils have many previous opportunities to get to know the school, as they visit for social events and recently to use the ICT suite for their lessons. Thereafter, the school has good procedures to check how well pupils are progressing and this can indicate where additional support is needed. Pupils with particular gifts or talents are given appropriate work to ensure they remain interested and challenged. Where necessary, all pupils can receive additional support in literacy and numeracy as they move towards their final year in school. The school supports pupils well if they have attendance or behaviour problems, or particular medical conditions.

Relationships and trust between pupils and staff are very good so that pupils are usually confident to approach staff with any problems they might have. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in setting targets as part of their individual education plan reviews. Pupils have a very high regard for their teachers and many have said their teachers are kind and helpful. The school does its best to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they can.

21. Pupils are well involved in decisions about the school and their own learning. The school council was formed at the start of this academic year and is making good progress in its organisation and influence. Councillors were chosen to represent each class and they take their duties seriously. They have organised fund-raising, they have looked at worship themes and music for assemblies and have looked at the playtime football arrangements. Their influence is growing as they grow in confidence. When pupils reach Year 6 they are expected to take on jobs as monitors around the school. As individuals, all pupils are expected to take some responsibility for their own learning by agreeing targets with their teachers, sharing them with their parents and working towards achieving them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very effective links with parents who are pleased with what the school does for their children. There are good links with other schools and satisfactory links with the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept very well informed about their child's progress and the school in general
- The school actively seeks parents' views about the school
- Parents make a good contribution to their children's successes and the work of the school
- The work done with other schools enhances the curriculum and helps prepare pupils for moving on

Commentary

22. The partnership between home and school begins with the good induction arrangements for new children and their parents. Thereafter parents are kept very well informed by letters about specific matters and a monthly newsletter, 'The Blue', which reports more widely about news, achievements, social events and diary dates. At the beginning of each half-term parents receive a plan of the forthcoming curriculum topics and themes. This is further supported by a website to summarise revision topics. Twice-yearly, parents have a formal meeting with class teachers to discuss progress and targets and at the end of the year they receive a very detailed written report. This describes progress in each subject, with indications of the National Curriculum levels achieved in the subjects of English, mathematics and science. Parents of pupils in Year 6 receive a very comprehensive report of their child's performance in the 'mock' statutory tests. This shows their results, the school's expectations for the real tests and guidance on how parents and children can work together to achieve them. Throughout the year parents can see the reading and homework diaries and are asked to comment in both of these. The governors' report to parents is particularly informative and the fact that over one hundred parents regularly attend the annual meeting with the governing body, is a tribute to the strength of support from parents.
23. The school asks parents' views in an annual questionnaire and these are diligently returned. The results of these are published annually. Where it is apparent that there may be an issue, further questionnaires are used. For example, last year a further survey of parents' views of homework was carried out. As a result, the policy was revised and arrangements standardised so that parents had a clearer understanding of what was expected. The school has established high levels of trust and parents feel that the school is very approachable and receptive to their views.

24. Parents play an active role in the work of the school. Their support for homework is very strong and the school helps parents to help their children at home. They are asked to monitor pupils' homework diaries and they do this diligently. To help them to work with their children, the school sends out a Calculation Guide, 'Hot Hints' for literacy, a mathematics Self-Help Guide and, for Year 6 pupils, a science and mathematics Course Guide. The way that parents help their children to learn is a factor in their success. Parents also help classes when they go on outside visits, they support social events avidly and the Friends of Blue Coat School (FOBC) provide a steady stream of funds to buy additional resources, all of which benefit their children's education.
25. There are well-established links with other schools. The headteacher is part of the local primary cluster and this results in the sharing of training, expertise and professional development. The school's governing body and FOBC have joint meetings and social events with the adjacent infant school for sharing of expertise and fund-raising. There are particularly strong links with the local secondary school. Pupils work closely with the secondary school in their final year to integrate aspects of the curriculum and smooth the transition process. In Year 6 pupils learn French, taught by a member of staff from a local independent secondary school. Further afield there are established links with schools in New Zealand, for e-mail pals, and China where the school is exchanging information on a shared environmental project.
26. Community links are satisfactory and extend pupils' experiences. There are strong links with the local church and the ministers lead assemblies and confirmation classes. Children visit the church regularly for seasonal celebrations. For some time, the school has worked closely with the Durham police headquarters and classes visit regularly to see how the police force helps them all.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is assisted very well by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff. Governance is very good. The management of the school is very effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body has an outstanding understanding of the school
- The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well
- Senior members of staff lead their subjects very well
- The systems in place to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development are very good
- The school's contribution to the training of teachers is excellent
- Finances are managed very well

Commentary

27. The governing body is a highly effective group of people which is led exceptionally well by the chair of governors. The governors have ensured that the school has moved forward very well since the last inspection. They have a very clear vision to provide the pupils with a very broad based education with high regard for pupils' personal development. The governors are very aware of their responsibilities and use their individual expertise to benefit pupils' learning. They have an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and ways that it can improve. Governors are frequent visitors to the school and support the headteacher and subject leaders very well. In addition, they see their own development, as governors, as a priority and this is evident in the strong uptake on governor training courses. Challenging objectives for the headteacher are set at the beginning of each academic year and progress

towards the objectives is monitored termly. They challenge and support the management very well.

28. The headteacher's leadership has enabled the school to maintain high standards within an inclusive environment which empowers children to learn to their full potential and to equip them with skills necessary for the future. In addition, the headteacher ensures that the personal development of pupils is a high priority. As a result of the headteacher's leadership, pupils at the school enjoy learning and achieve well. They behave very well and take responsibility for ensuring a secure and happy community. The headteacher places high emphasis on enabling pupils to achieve healthy lifestyles, as well as to prepare them for future learning. The headteacher's presence around the school assists the outstanding climate for learning. Parents, pupils, governors and staff have high regard for the headteacher.
29. The subject leaders assist the leadership very well. The recent changes and delegation of responsibilities has been very effective. The subject leaders have very good subject knowledge and a firm grasp on standards. They are very innovative which is seen in the broad based curriculum and the excellent opportunities for enrichment of learning. The high standard of teaching of subject leaders is a strong feature of the school.
30. The governors, rightly, state that they are 'great reviewers'. The school gathers information systematically to assess its performance and to direct its future plans through questionnaires, staff audits, subject reviews and action plans. The school improvement plan is a very effective document which highlights future development. The schools' evaluations and points for development are summarised and judgements made of its current position; however, some judgements are rather modest.
31. The school is involved actively in training student teachers together with a local university, the local education authority and a cluster of other schools. The school is the key school with a school training centre co-ordinator who organises placements within the cluster as well as monitoring trainee teachers' files and assessments. Staff are welcoming and supportive towards trainees and children extend the same courtesies to trainees as they do to their teachers. The arrangements result in a good number of trainee teachers working within the school. Trainee teachers benefit from working alongside and observing skilled practitioners. Staff are encouraged to strive for further professional development through working with the trainees who bring to the classroom their own strengths, interest and levels of enthusiasm.
32. Financial management is very good. Administrative systems are very well organised and provide very good support for the headteacher and governors. Governors are very involved in monitoring the budget and making financial decisions. They have a very good understanding of the principles of 'best value'. Leadership and management overall are much more effective than at the time of the last inspection.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	542,883	Balance from previous year	10,618
Total expenditure	534,418	Balance carried forward to the next	19,083
Expenditure per pupil	2,344		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high by the end of Year 6 in writing, speaking and listening
- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- Very good procedures for assessment enable pupils to improve their work to a high standard
- Insufficient time is spent on teaching reading skills in Year 6
- The subject is very well led and managed

Commentary

33. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. Almost all pupils reach the level expected of their age and a large proportion exceeds those levels. Standards are similar to those attained in the last five years with the exception of last year where the standards were closer to those expected nationally. Pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs or those who have particular gifts or talents. Standards are much higher than when the school was last inspected and overall improvement since then has been very good.
34. The well above average standards in writing are the result of a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills. Additional time is allowed each week for pupils to write at length. The topics are carefully chosen to interest them and very carefully prepared so pupils have a lot of material to write about. For example, Year 5 pupils compared three letters to the Prime Minister, urging him to make sure that every child around the world received an education, and assessed their effectiveness in terms of format, linguistic features and persuasive devices. This arose as part of a discussion on the right to be educated. Pupils used terms such as 'theoretical questions' and 'emotive language' with ease. The teaching of writing and the way pupils learn has been thought through very carefully. Thus in Year 3, pupils learn to identify different types of words and their uses in a very practical way, using highlighter pens to pick out important points. By Year 6, pupils are sufficiently skilled to use the styles and conventions of journalism to report real historical events from the 1950s onwards, conveying the flavour of the period successfully. Pupils' writing is fluent, accomplished and often humorous, with some arresting openings such as this from the big, bad wolf: 'I gave a huge sigh, right from the bottom of my paws...'
35. Pupils are well used to discussing ideas with a partner, and confidently ask and answer questions, showing a very good grasp of how to debate sensitively and to give opinions but be ready to appreciate another point of view. The relaxed relationships between adults and pupils aid this. There are many good features to the teaching; these include: fast pace, lively delivery and a good balance between teachers' demonstrations and pupils' involvement. Where teaching is good rather than better the pace tends towards the pedestrian, the teaching a little over-emphatic and pupils have fewer opportunities to make independent choices.
36. Teachers' marking makes very clear where pupils have met the criteria for assessment, what they need to do to improve and then give time to make the necessary corrections. In addition, pupils assess each other's work and their positive but developmental comments mirror those of their teachers. For example, one pupil commented: 'Your argument is very well balanced

but "In my opinion I think" is too strong - rewrite this paragraph more tentatively.' These fruitful dialogues push pupils' learning on.

37. The school acknowledges that the teaching of reading in Year 6 is less structured than lower down the school. As a result, standards by the end of Year 6 are above rather than well above average and pupils' achievement satisfactory rather than good. Very little time is given to developing the skills of skim-reading, scanning for information or discussing in depth or making notes on texts in small groups. Pupils' comprehension skills therefore are less sharp than they could be. By contrast, pupils in Year 5 are working at a much higher level because they do a very well selected range of reading activities each day, taught with rigour and precision, designed to deepen the understanding of different abilities within the class.
38. Leadership and management are very good and the innovative teaching techniques set a very good example to colleagues. Since taking up the post in January, the subject leader has continued to build on the work of the previous subject leader, monitoring teaching and learning and from these observations drawing up a pertinent action plan. He has a very good understanding of the role of ICT in the teaching and pupils' learning in English and of drama to stimulate writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. Literacy is used well in other subjects. There are very good links with science where pupils have much practice in writing non-chronological reports as well as factual information and in history where pupils use a wide range of presentations of historical facts using news bulletins, poems, interviews and advertisements to name but a few.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is good, although it varies from satisfactory to very good
- The leadership of the subject is very good and the management is good
- Opportunities to develop mathematical skills in other subjects are unsatisfactory

Commentary

40. Standards, in Year 6 are well above average. Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good, overall. The grouping of pupils into sets of similar levels of attainment in Years 6 is effective at all levels of attainment, including those pupils with special educational needs.
41. In the best teaching the planning is thorough and in lessons pupils make very good progress in their learning. In these lessons, opportunities to use mathematical skills to assist learning in other subjects are exploited; for example, in Year 6 pupils gained a better understanding of how to plot results on a line graph to redress a weakness seen in recording results in science. Higher attaining pupils understood how to calculate the mean of a set of data and to round off to one place decimal place. A weakness in otherwise very good lessons is the lack of opportunity for pupils to select their own equipment. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace of learning is variable and sometimes slow, and the matching of work to pupils' level of attainment is limited, on occasions. A strong feature in all lessons is pupils' very good attitudes to work and behaviour because of very effective relationships between teachers and pupils. As a result, pupils work very productively together with enjoyment and achieve well. Older pupils are prepared well for work in the secondary school.

42. The leadership of subject is very good and the management is good. Improvement since the last inspection is very good as standards have risen significantly from in line with the national average to well above average. The subject leader shows a very good role model in the quality of her teaching. The monitoring of teachers' lesson plans and pupils' work provide the subject leader with a clear view of standards and ways to improve their achievement further. The strengths in the leadership of the subject provide the school with very good capacity to improve standards further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

43. This is an area that the school has identified rightly for improvement. Examination of pupils' work in other subjects shows limited examples of developing and using mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average and pupils make good progress in their learning
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, and occasionally the teaching is outstanding
- The use of ICT in the subject is unsatisfactory

Commentary

44. Standards, in Year 6 are well above average. Improvements since the last inspection are very good and standards have risen significantly. The strong emphasis on practical, investigative work helps pupils to achieve well. The leadership of the subject is very good and management is good. The subject leader shows an extremely good role model in the quality of her teaching and subject knowledge.
45. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Pupils are highly motivated to learn and their behaviour is very good. Collaborative working is encouraged and teaching assistants help lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs well. Occasionally, in lessons, the pace of learning dips; for example, minor weaknesses in organising tasks slowed down pupils' progress during an investigation to develop pupils' understanding of 'fair testing'. Exceptional teaching was seen in Year 3. Pupils gained a deeper understanding of setting up an investigation to find out conditions required for plant growth. Relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils' behaviour were exemplary. Very good use of 'job cards' developed pupils' understanding of their responsibilities. Pupils were highly motivated and enjoyment in learning was most apparent which resulted in high achievement. Pupils understood the importance of safe practice, such as wearing gloves when handling soil.
46. Pupils' work shows very limited evidence of the use of ICT to develop pupils' learning in science; for example, recording using data-handling programs or spreadsheets. No evidence was provided of pupils using monitoring equipment or digital microscopes.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6 standards are above average
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good so that most pupils achieve highly
- Leadership and management are very good, giving a very clear sense of purpose and direction
- The use of ICT in other subjects is good

Commentary

47. Overall standards are above average in Year 6. In Year 5 they are set to be well above average as pupils have access to the use of sensors and data logging activities. Standards in all other aspects are well above average in Year 6 and pupils achieve highly, making very good progress from a low base when they entered the school in Year 3. Standards have improved dramatically since the previous inspection because the school has invested wisely in computer technology and staff are confident in its use. A further significant factor in the improvements is that pupils extend their skills in most other subjects of the curriculum, although this is less well developed in science. The school has established very close links with the local infant school, who share use of the computer suite so that continuity of learning is enhanced.
48. Teachers make very good use of the computer suite in extending skills in ICT. Because planning is very clear and teachers share learning objectives with pupils based on previous work, they immediately settle down to work at the readily accessible computers and make very good use of the time available because they know clearly what is expected of them. Because planning ensures that work is carefully based on what has gone before and teachers keep careful records of progress, most pupils make very good progress as they move through school. In Year 4 pupils used control techniques to make attractive designs as part of their work in art. Older pupils control the rate and timing of traffic lights. Teachers plan work which is well suited to differing levels of ability so that pupils are challenged at appropriate levels. In Year 5 this helped all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to increase their skills in changing variables in a spreadsheet. Higher attaining pupils were expected to devise their own spreadsheets whilst lower ability pupils were asked to make amendments to an existing sheet in order to remain within budget.
49. Teachers are very knowledgeable and confident in the use of the technology. For example, they make very good use of interactive whiteboards in order to clarify explanations and illustrate tasks to be completed. This leads pupils to be similarly confident. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 indulged in highly articulate and technical discussions when demonstrating their skills in PowerPoint presentations on pollution and in posting these on a website so that pupils in China and Hong Kong may gain access.
50. Because the management of pupils is very good, pupils use the equipment sensibly and are confident to access programmes, the Internet and email. Relationships are very good so that pupils collaborate very well and have high self-confidence and esteem. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils demonstrated the range and depth of their work to visitors, showing highly developed skills across a wide range of work. The progress of many pupils is enhanced by their use of computers at home, when work in class is often extended. Some pupils email their homework so that it is available when they return to school.
51. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject. She checks provision very effectively and supports colleagues in making improvements. She has a very clear understanding of the way ahead in order to raise standards. The school makes very good use of the expertise of a member of the governing body who provides regular technical assistance. The improving standards and provision have been recognised by the granting of a national award for work in this area.

Information communication technology across the curriculum

52. The school makes good use of ICT in most other subjects of the curriculum to extend ICT skills and to deepen pupils' understanding of the other subjects. In Year 6, for instance, pupils combined history, literacy and ICT skills when they produced professional looking postcards, using informal styles of writing and basing the content of their writing on subjects relevant to people in the 1960s. ICT is currently under-used in science because of limited resources such as scanners, computer linked microscopes and sensors. Pupils use ICT effectively to help them to find out information. For example, in Year 5 pupils communicated with other pupils in China and Hong Kong through the web page and email and shared research on issues such as pollution.

HUMANITIES

Work in geography and history was sampled so there are no judgements on overall provision. However the statutory requirements for teaching the programmes of study are met in both subjects. In both subjects good use is made of ICT in order to extend knowledge and skills, particularly in research.

53. No complete lessons were seen in **history**. Teachers ensure that history comes alive for pupils so that they gain insights into times past and deepen their understanding. Pupils are encouraged to develop their skills of historical enquiry and to question because teachers welcome their efforts. In part of a lesson seen in Year 4 work on the Tudors, for example, a pupil wanted to know why Henry VIII did not refer to an orphanage in order to solve his problems of succession. The teacher's knowledgeable and sensitive reply helped to extend his understanding of the period. Teachers present pupils with many opportunities to increase their understanding of the nature of historical sources. They learn to compare different aspects of life within historical periods and with life at the present. For example in Year 5 pupils contrasted the life styles of Greeks and Spartans and in Year 6 compared life in the 60s with today, making effective use of Internet research. However, on occasions when pupils are asked to colour in pictures on worksheets, opportunities are missed to extend skills and understanding.
54. One lesson was seen in **geography**. The school has invested in a good range of maps and atlases and this is helping to improve mapping skills. As part of the good teaching in Year 3, pupils made good progress in their use of maps to locate places and began to trace routes because the teacher ensured that they studied aerial photographs and maps of Durham City after looking at globes, atlases and regional maps. The very good teaching of ICT skills in Year 5 enabled most pupils to access secondary sources from the Internet in order to predict what a contrasting environment, Llandudno, might be like. They used hyperlinks very skilfully in order to elicit information on buildings, landscape, economic activity and leisure. Work was enhanced by the teacher's use of the interactive whiteboard to introduce the topic and to help in leading a class discussion on a map of Llandudno as part of the plenary session. Teachers ensure that pupils produce clear maps and sketches and consider how issues such as environmental improvement might improve the quality of life locally. The school's work in developing the international dimension to the curriculum is extending pupils' knowledge of other places effectively.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology and music were sampled and so no judgements can be made on overall provision, teaching and standards in these subjects. No lessons were seen in music, part of a lesson was seen in each of art and design, and design and technology; three PE lessons were observed. Discussions were held with pupils and subject leaders and a range of work sampled from different age groups.

55. Pupils enjoy **art and design** and use their sketchbooks well to try out new ideas and to experiment with different techniques. High achieving pupils in Year 6, for example, successfully achieved a 3-D effect through using shading techniques accurately and average and lower attainers showed good control over smudging and blending pastels to give an impression of speed and light. In the one lesson seen, pupils discussed sensibly how they could transfer their 2-D designs for mathematics on to the 3-D template. Pupils used ICT well to find out about different types of masks and their analyses were mature as seen in this evaluation when a higher attainer wrote, 'This mask may have been created for acting on stage. It looks relatively modern.'
56. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about **design and technology**, and thoroughly enjoy the design process. Year 6 pupils showed an admirable grasp of technical vocabulary such as 'components' and 'underside elevation' which they used to explain how they went about designing a motorised vehicle. Using an 8-step design process, pupils went on to show different diagrams to expose the elements of construction. Teaching was obviously very thorough and pupils were fully aware that the picture frames they made were prototypes for chassis for vehicles. Pupils are self critical and analyse the problems they encountered very well, concluding, for example, 'Our designs were much more complicated than they needed to be.' In the one lesson seen, the teaching method of quick demonstration followed by pupils investigating for themselves gave Year 5 pupils a very good preparation for understanding how to make an efficient mechanism.
57. No lessons in **music** were seen and there was limited work to scrutinise. From looking at the planning it is clear that pupils follow a suitably wide-ranging curriculum with a strong influence on music-making. The curriculum has improved substantially since the last inspection and pupils are now exposed to a much broader range of enjoyable music, relevant to their age and experience. Future plans include developing links with the community and local schools and to explore cross-curricular links with other subjects. The quality of pupils' singing is good and the tone sweet and tuneful. They sing well in two parts. Pupils have excellent opportunities to pursue their musical talents through additional instrumental lessons given by visiting teachers and numerous clubs and after-school activities.

Physical education

Provision in PE is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are highly motivated and enjoy keeping fit
- Standards are high and talented pupils play for national teams
- Teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve very well

Commentary

58. Pupils say, with pride, 'This is a sporty school' and go on to explain that this started three years ago when the new headteacher came. They bubble with enthusiasm and energy when talking about the excellent range of sports open to them, a range that includes fencing, cross-country running and hockey for single sex and mixed teams. A large proportion of pupils take part in extra-curricular sport at lunchtimes and after school. They are highly successful in competitive games in hockey, football and tennis. A much larger proportion than usual play for their county or for famous youth teams; several play for under-15 teams because of their high level of skill. Hockey is very popular. Boys and girls enter national competitions and several girls have been invited to train with a national team. In tennis, Year 3 has reached the semi-finals and in cross-country running the school finished in the top ten out of over 2000 entrants.

59. Pupils generally are highly aware of the importance of being fit and healthy. The curriculum is very well organised to ensure that pupils get at least two hours PE a week and opportunities for at least two lunchtimes a week to play other games when it is their turn to use the equipment for different ball games and fitness activities. In the lessons seen there was a strong emphasis on developing skills. Teaching and learning were very good and standards well above those expected. Lessons took place outdoors and concentrated on the correct way to hit and retrieve the ball in games such as cricket and rounders. Pupils showed a high level of skill at swinging the cricket bat correctly, understanding where their weight should fall. Spells of intensive coaching where pupils were urged: 'Practising the swing is more important than hitting the ball' were suitably interspersed with competitive games between different groups of players. No time was lost because the teacher had used the interactive whiteboard at the start of the lesson to give a quick visual demonstration of the rules and layout of the game. In a very good lesson taken by a visiting specialist from the secondary school, pupils achieved extremely well, learning collaborative and leadership skills though taking part in adventurous outdoor activities. A notable feature of PE is the strong emphasis on enjoyment and continuous activity so that pupils are energised both mentally and physically by the end of lessons. The subject is very well led and managed and standards and provision have improved very well since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship is enhanced by the very good relationships between staff and pupils.

Commentary

60. Provision for education about the uses and misuses of drugs and about sex and relationships is very good. These are taught during personal, social and health education lessons and as part of work in science. During personal, social and health education sessions pupils learn about rights and responsibilities, and such issues as how to deal with bullying and how to lead a healthy life style. The school is part of a project to develop healthy eating. Work is further complemented by opportunities for involvement in the school council, where pupils make a real contribution to the life of the school. For example, they make decisions on playground equipment and on the organisation of charity days. Pupils have many opportunities for contributing to charities in order to help those less fortunate than themselves and take on responsible jobs to help with the smooth running of the school. Personal development is further enhanced by the very warm and caring relationships in school and by the very positive role models provided by staff.

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 (ethos)	1
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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