

INSPECTION REPORT

CARR HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gateshead

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 108321

Headteacher: Mr Callum Kidd

Lead inspector: Miss Kari Manning

Dates of inspection: 14th – 16th June 2005

Inspection number: 266568

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 277

School address: Carr Hill Road
Carr Hill
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
Postcode: NE9 5NB

Telephone number: 0191 4771203
Fax number: 0191 4213858

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Cllr Mrs June Joyce

Date of previous inspection: June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Carr Hill Community Primary is a large school, with 254 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6. A further 46 children attend the nursery part-time. The number of pupils on roll has fallen in the last three years as fewer children are born in the area. The proportion of pupils who start or leave the school after the reception class is more than twice the national average.

When they start in nursery, children's attainments vary but are mostly a long way below what is typical for their age. Very few have the skills and knowledge expected for their age, particularly in language, mathematics and in their personal and social development. One child in the nursery and seven older pupils have statements of their special educational needs and a further 54 have been identified as needing extra help from teachers or specialists. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties or speech and communication problems and this is a significant barrier to learning.

The area in general is very disadvantaged. This is reflected in the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average and by the fact that the school is part of an Education Action Zone and is funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative and the Single Regeneration Budget. The deprivation of the area is also recognised in the school's association with the Sure Start project and other local schemes aimed at raising standards and the quality of provision. Almost all pupils come from British families and only one child is at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. A very small number of pupils come from refugee or asylum seeking families and seven are in public care.

In recent years the school has received several awards for achievement, sports, arts and for being a healthy school. It also has an Investors in People award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2026 7	Miss Manning K	Lead inspector	English
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Special educational needs
			English as an additional language
9511	Mrs Longfield A	Lay inspector	
3334 4	Mr M Eves	Team inspector	Religious education
			Geography
			History
1151 0	Mr K Oglesby	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Information and communication technology
			Physical education
1263 1	Mrs M McLean	Team Inspector	Science
			Music
			Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited
 14 Enterprise House
 Kingsway
 Team Valley
 Gateshead
 Tyne & Wear
 NE11 0SR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	15
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school. Very good teaching and a rich and vibrant curriculum ensure that pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and achieve very well. This year, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. Outstanding leadership and management from the headteacher and dedicated staff and governors give the school the capacity to raise standards further. Pupils also benefit from very good links with parents, the community and other schools. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school's continued improvement is underpinned by very good leadership and management by key staff and governors and excellent leadership from the headteacher.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal development results in them having extremely positive attitudes to learning and behaving very well.
- Pupils benefit from a rich and exciting curriculum and very good links with parents, the community and other schools.
- The school's arrangements for the care of pupils could not be better.
- A real success for the school is that pupils now achieve very well in information and communication technology.
- Though the teaching of reading and handwriting are good pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school has continued to improve at a good rate since the previous inspection in 1996. All of the key issues from the previous inspection have been tackled systematically. The nursery curriculum is now challenging and stimulating and focuses very much on children's personal and social development. The quality of provision for information and communication technology has improved tremendously and standards have risen as a result. The school has succeeded, against all the odds, in raising the number of pupils who achieve a higher level in mathematics and science. They are not so successful in English.

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	D	D	B
mathematics	E	C	B	A*
science	C	C	C	A

*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.*

Overall, pupils achieve very well. In the Foundation Stage, children achieve very well though their very low starting point means that few reach the early goals by the end of reception class. In English, standards last year were well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Inspection findings are that pupils achieve well but with stronger teaching they could do better and consequently standards are well below average in Years 2 and 6. In mathematics, standards last year were below average in Year 2 but above average in Year 6. Inspection findings are that pupils achieve very well in this subject but standards in Year 2 and Year 6 remain below average. In Year 6 standards are affected by the high proportion of pupils who started after the reception class. This is a key factor in

why standards in science are also below average in the current Year 6 despite pupils achieving very well. In reading and writing, girls significantly outperform boys and recent initiatives aimed at reducing the gap have not had time to make a significant impact. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well and reach the levels of which they are capable. Other groups of pupils, including those from asylum seeking or refugee families and those who are in care benefit from very good support and achieve very well. Pupils who are talented academically or in sports or music achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology and standards now match those expected for pupils' ages. Standards in religious education match those prescribed by the syllabus used in local schools.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. They have extremely good attitudes to learning and behave very well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is below average but most pupils arrive at school on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. There is very good teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in the subjects of mathematics, science and information and communication technology and good teaching in English. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching, particularly in supporting pupils who have special educational needs. All pupils get a fair deal from the school and have equal opportunities to make progress. Very good links with parents, the community and other schools combine with an exciting curriculum to help pupils succeed. In addition, the excellent care and guidance provided for pupils and the schools inclusive ethos plays a crucial part in promoting their extremely positive attitudes and ensuring that they stay safe and healthy.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The headteacher is an outstanding leader who inspires parents, staff, pupils and governors. The leadership and management of senior staff is very good. Governance has improved since the previous inspection and governors now do a very good job on behalf of the school and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The most significant barrier to raising the school's performance in national tests is the high numbers of pupils who start the school after reception.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents speak very highly of the school and are delighted with what it offers their children and themselves. They say that they are always welcome and know that the school is a place to turn to for advice or friendship. Pupils are proud of their school and of themselves. They look up to the adults who teach and help them and generally come into school with a smile on their faces.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Review current strategies for teaching reading and handwriting in order to raise standards in both.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Standards in English are well below average in Year 2 and Year 6. Girls outperform boys in reading and writing. In mathematics and science standards are below those expected in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology and standards match those expected for their ages. In religious education, pupils achieve well and standards meet those prescribed by the syllabus used in local schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and handwriting could be higher.
- Standards in information and communication technology have risen since the previous inspection and now match those expected for pupils' ages.
- Pupils perform very well in comparisons with similar schools.
- Last year more than half of pupils in Year 6 did extremely well and attained a higher level in mathematics and science.

Commentary

1 The schools results in national tests are affected tremendously by the high mobility of pupils. This is more than twice the national average and in the current Year 6 this group represents more than a third of the class.

2 When they start in nursery, most children have very poor skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematics and few experiences of the world outside of their homes and families. A number of children in the nursery have special educational needs because of their learning difficulties or physical disabilities. In addition, many children lack the personal or social skills that enable them to mix and communicate with adults or other children and this is a key barrier to learning. The school's links with the Sure Start initiative are starting to have an impact but for most children their attainment is far below what is typical for their age. From this very low starting point children go on to achieve very well during their time in the Foundation Stage but despite this few achieve the early goals expected by the end of reception.

3 In English, teachers focus very much on promoting speaking and listening skills because this is one of the main barriers to learning that pupils in this school have to overcome. They are successful in their efforts and pupils achieve well, gaining confidence in speaking and extending their vocabulary considerably. However, when they start school pupils' language is so limited that pupils never really catch up and despite effective teaching inspection findings are that standards are well below average by Year 6. Last year, the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who reached the expected level in reading was well below average and in writing it was below average. Fewer pupils than in most other schools achieved a higher level. The picture was much the same in Year 6, where standards in English were below average and fewer pupils achieved a higher level. It was noticeable that pupils who had achieved a higher level in mathematics and science did not do so in English. This was largely because the teaching is more effective in those two subjects. Though girls are working almost a year ahead of boys by Year 2 and continue to do so in Year 6 teachers have identified this as an issue and put in place initiatives aimed at reducing the gap. Inspection findings are that standards in reading and writing are well

below average but could be higher if the teaching of reading and handwriting was more effective. As it is, pupils achieve well but could do better.

4 The school's results in mathematics are a real success story. Last year, standards were below average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. In Year 2, standards that were below average nonetheless represented very good achievement from pupils' low starting point in nursery. The school's superb performance in Year 6 tests is largely down to the fact that very good teaching enabled more than half of the pupils in Year 6 to achieve a higher level in national tests. Inspection findings are that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are below average. The apparent fall in Year 6 is because more than a third of the pupils started school after Year 3 and a significant number of these also have special educational needs.

5 In 2004 by the end of Year 2, teacher assessment for science showed that fewer pupils than in most other schools reached the expected level. This does not detract from the fact that pupils had achieved very well from such a low start in nursery. In Year 6, standards matched the national average and more than half of pupils achieved a higher level. The school's performance data shows that the progress pupils made between Year 3 and Year 6 had been very good. Overall, very good teaching ensures that pupils achieve particularly well in this subject. Inspection findings are that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are below average this year; for the same reasons that they are below average in mathematics.

6 Comparisons with similar schools give a feel for how well pupils perform. In Year 2 pupils perform much better than those in similar schools in writing and better in reading and mathematics. In Year 6, they perform much better in mathematics and science and better in English. Though the schools results are rising at a similar rate to the national picture in Year 2, they are rising at a faster rate in Year 6. Last year the school exceeded the targets it had set for raising standards in mathematics but did not get the number of higher levels it had predicted in English.

7 All of the school's efforts have paid off in information and communication technology. Standards have risen substantially since the previous inspection and now match those expected for pupils' ages. This is a result of information and communication technology being used exceptionally well to support pupils' learning in all subjects. Standards in religious education have been maintained since the previous inspection and continue to meet those prescribed by the syllabus used in local schools.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.5 (12.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.9 (12.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.4 (14.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.8 (25.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.8 (27.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.0 (28.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

8 Other groups of pupils, including those from asylum seeking or refugee families and those who are in care benefit from very good support and achieve very well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils gain tremendously from the school's very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for other aspects of their personal development. They respond by behaving very well and no pupil has been excluded in recent years. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Attendance last year was below average but most pupils arrive at school on time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's efforts to raise attendance are beginning to pay dividends.
- Staff are very successful at promoting pupils' self-esteem.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual liking and respect and this underpins all of the school's work.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are shaped by the schools very good provision.

Commentary

9 Personal development and raising the self-esteem of pupils is at the heart of everything staff do. Pupils show very good attitudes in school because of the hard work of teachers to ensure that every pupil is valued. Teachers praise and celebrate good work and good behaviour. They know and really care about their pupils. Pupils are expected to work together in lessons and they generally do this sensibly and politely, though some are lacking in maturity. They are quite capable of discussing complex issues and putting forward an argument in debate and it is only their limited vocabulary that holds some back. The growing self-esteem of pupils is evident in discussions with members of the school council and in the way that pupils are proud and prepared to represent their school at local events.

10 The relationships forged between adults and pupils are based on mutual liking and respect. As a result, pupils try hard to please their teachers and generally give their best efforts in lessons. In the reception class, children are expected to share equipment and be patient and loving towards one another. This ethos permeates school life in successive years. Pupils say that they make friends easily and very few have experienced bullying or any form of harassment. The whole-school commitment of caring for one another is very good and is a true model of inclusiveness. Through the high quality of its leadership, the school devotedly caters for everyone's needs. Pupils follow the caring role models seen among staff and value the contribution each pupil has to make.

11 Very good provision for pupils' personal growth makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is something the school does very well. It works because the school has clear policies that are implemented consistently by all staff and are also linked with the school's general aims. The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development through assemblies and lessons. In assemblies, pupils are given time to reflect on prayers or their own thoughts and feelings. Pupils are also expected to explore their thoughts and feelings in *circle time* lessons, when pupils are encouraged to discuss matters that are important to them.

12 The school's provision for pupils' moral development is also very good. The school's code of conduct emphasises the care and respect that pupils are expected to show one another. Staff expect good behaviour and pupils have a clear understanding of the rewards and sanctions procedures. The expectation that pupils and staff will respect the beliefs of others pervades the school. Pupils' social development is promoted extremely well and is one of the things that most pleases parents. Social values are well-promoted by adults throughout the school and pupils are encouraged to care and take responsibility for others. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities, such as distributing materials in lessons, organising chairs and equipment for school assemblies and tidying up at the end of lessons. Teachers also encourage pupils to examine problems in the context of the wider world. The school successfully promotes an atmosphere in which pupils are able to discuss important questions and concerns. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to encounter and understand the traditions and values from different cultures in music, art and design, history and geography.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93.7%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	1.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

13 Despite very good efforts by the school to raise attendance levels a small number of pupils fail to attend school regularly. The school's initiatives to promote good attendance and punctuality are having a significant effect. Pupils are given praise and rewards for full attendance and know that this is valued by staff. Parents are given frequent reminders of the need to bring their children to school every day and of the importance of education. The school has forged close links with the local education welfare officer who keeps a check on attendance and looks for patterns of absence. Where it looks as though there are difficulties the officer visits families to find out why the child is not in school. The breakfast club has been particularly successful at raising attendance and punctuality and is very popular with parents and pupils. In addition to this all staff 'meet and greet' their pupils at the start of each day and in this way get to know parents.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll
White – British	276
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3
Mixed – White and Black African	1
Mixed – White and Asian	4
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2
Any other ethnic group	3

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Very good teaching and a rich, vibrant curriculum are the main strengths of the provision but very good links with parents, the community and other schools all play a part. The ethos of the school is warm and welcoming and staff take excellent care of pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. The assessment of pupils work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good command of the subjects and areas of learning that they teach.
- Pupils have the same fair opportunities to do well.
- Throughout the school, teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and this has a marked impact on pupils' attitudes to learning.
- The quality of marking and target setting has improved and they are now good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	25 (49%)	20 (39%)	5 (9%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

14 Teachers in the Foundation Stage have a good knowledge of each area of learning and know how young children learn. They also recognise the barriers to learning caused by the background and life experience of most children. As a result, there is an appropriate emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and on building up a vocabulary that enables children to talk confidently. In Years 1 to 6, teachers have a good command of the National Curriculum subjects and use this to plan work that is often exciting to pupils. In addition to this teachers use the national Literacy and Numeracy strategies effectively to teach English and mathematics. In mathematics this has been particularly successful but the same cannot be said for English where progress in reading and handwriting has not kept pace with progress in grammar and punctuation.

15 Pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds get the same fair deal from the school. A particular strength of the teaching, throughout the school, is the provision for pupils who have special educational needs. Their work is planned meticulously so that what they are doing matches the targets in their individual education plans. Programmes, such as those designed to promote literacy and mathematics skills are taught well and in many lessons, pupils who have special educational needs are given extra help from well-briefed teaching assistants and from work that is adapted to their needs. This all helps them to achieve very well and gain the levels of which they are capable. Very good leadership has resulted in the teachers identifying pupils who are most able and providing for their particular talents or skills. Pupils who are gifted academically and those who have talents in sports, arts or music are given the help they need through extra tuition and coaching. The school has gained awards for its work in sport and the arts and pupils benefit significantly from teachers efforts in these curriculum areas. Those who are most able benefit from the school's strong links with the local secondary school.

16 Teachers are very good at managing pupils. In general, this results from the warm and respectful relationships between pupils and staff, which ensure that pupils are keen to please their teachers and try hard to do their best. Any misbehaviour is dealt with quietly and firmly and all staff follow the school's agreed procedures for promoting good conduct. For example, they praise pupils when they have done something right and speak quietly to them if they misbehave. Pupils know what is expected of them and they understand the consequences of misbehaviour. The procedures work well and ensure that pupils who have special educational needs linked to behavioural problems do not disrupt the learning of others. Teachers also ensure very good behaviour and very positive attitudes from pupils by planning activities that are interesting and challenging. Lessons move along at a brisk pace and pupils have to concentrate in order to keep up. The result of all this hard work is that, in a school where managing behaviour could be a big issue, most pupils behave very sensibly.

17 The school's procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do are good and they are used effectively by teachers. In the Foundation Stage, teachers assess what children can do when they start nursery and use this to fix a starting point for the curriculum. Throughout the Foundation Stage, staff use nationally prescribed record

books to measure progress through to the end of reception. One of the issues faced by the school is that very few children reach the early goals by the end of reception though they are then expected to begin work on a much more formal National Curriculum programme of study. Co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science monitor the results of national tests very closely in order to identify any gaps in teaching and learning. It was this level of monitoring that revealed the gap in attainment between girls and boys in English. However, it is the day-to-day marking that has improved most since the previous inspection. This is now good and is used to set realistic targets for each pupil. Marking is carried out thoroughly and pupils' progress and attainment are measured against the aims of the lesson. Useful and detailed comments from teachers help pupils to know how well they have done and what they need to do to get better and pupils know what their targets are and when they have achieved them.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good and is enriched by an extensive range of sports, arts and music clubs, after-school activities and first-hand experiences for pupils. It caters very well for the needs of all pupils. There is a good number of teaching and support staff. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources at the school meet the needs of the curriculum very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An innovative curriculum motivates pupils and makes school fun.
- High quality displays in classrooms and shared areas reflect the imaginative and exciting curriculum offered to pupils.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

18 Staff know how important it is for pupils to enjoy school and they are constantly looking for ways of making the curriculum rich and exciting. The recommendations of *Excellence and Enjoyment* are very much evident in the school's curriculum. While literacy and numeracy remain vital to the curriculum, teachers are not afraid to seek ways of bringing subjects together and they have worked hard to ensure that the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is now more appropriate and the curriculum for information and communication technology meets requirements. When asked to talk about their work it is the visits that pupils remember most and they get very animated when talking about an outing to world class art galleries or music centres in Gateshead. The after school sports, arts and music activities are also very popular with pupils and professional tutors and coaches help to develop pupils skills. Parents say that these types of activity are of great benefit to their children and help to raise their confidence and self-esteem.

19 The school pays close attention to the inclusion of all pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language, come from asylum seeking or refugee families and pupils who join the school part-way through their education all have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to learn. They are given extra help when it is needed and teachers work hard to ensure that they play a full part in lessons. The school has a comprehensive policy for preventing racial harassment and, because staff and pupils follow it closely, everyone gets a fair deal.

20 A very well planned programme of lessons helps the oldest pupils learn about sex and relationships and pupils are taught about healthy lifestyles and issues such as the abuse of medicines and drugs. All classes have some time each week when pupils can talk

about any difficulties or concerns. Pupils say that they know they can go to any adult if they are worried at school, and that they will help them. In the Foundation Stage, children's personal, social and emotional development is at the heart of the curriculum. Children learn many of the skills that they need to succeed in school, such as taking their turn, making friends and becoming independent. Pupils experience a range of outdoor and adventurous pursuits on a residential visit. They develop self-esteem and learn the importance of teamwork through many aspects of school life, particularly in physical education and after school clubs.

21 Vibrant displays support pupils' learning very well, value the work they do and reflect the breadth of the curriculum. In classrooms, displays indicate pupils' achievements in most subjects, and the high quality of presentation of these helps to raise pupils' self-esteem. Interactive displays in shared areas, such as an eye-catching display about the Chinese New Year, encourage pupils to learn from what other pupils have been doing.

Care, guidance and support

All aspects of care, welfare, health and safety are excellent. The support and guidance offered to all pupils, including the most vulnerable, is outstanding. Adults listen to pupils views and act on them whenever possible.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school could not do more to ensure the welfare of pupils.
- Staff are acutely aware of pupils' academic progress and personal development.
- Staff and pupils have gained a Healthy School Award and are proud of this.

Commentary

22 This is a school where the staff have the outcomes 'be healthy' and 'stay safe' very much at heart. The site manager, governors and staff ensure that the school is a safe and secure place for pupils to learn. The policies and routines relating to care, health and safety are excellent, very well considered and properly carried out. Pupils, in their turn behave safely in lessons and during breaks. The headteacher leads this aspect of the school with infectious energy and vision. The school is already almost fully compliant with the Disability Act, and is installing a lift to complete this. Staff know the children very well and go the extra mile to address their needs. They act quickly and tactfully if a pupil is unhappy or experiencing any personal problems, and are careful to make sure new arrivals settle in well. As a result, pupils feel secure, valued and included. A particular strength is the way the school tracks the care being offered to its most vulnerable pupils. It is exceptionally vigilant in checking what other organisations are doing and making sure that communication is prompt and effective.

23 The support and guidance for all pupils' academic and personal development is equally thorough. A strong feature is the way that pupils are involved as partners in judging their achievements. For example, in almost every lesson, teachers ask pupils to think about how well they have done. The school keeps a very close eye on pupils' progress and any concerns are acted upon quickly. Relationships across the school, and with parents, are very good. The advice and guidance offered is optimistic and positive, for example, displays of achievements use phrases like *a personal best*, *literacy superstar*, or *flying high*. Pupils respond very well to all this, and strive to achieve their individual targets.

Example of outstanding practice

This is an example of how the school ensures that the principles of *Every Child Matters* are embedded into their everyday practice.

For pupils applying to Carr Hill, there are no casual, part-time, low status places available. The package of care and support hits them even before they arrive, with the sensitive arrangements to help newcomers relax and settle quickly. Once in, they belong; they matter; they 'are one of us'. Or as the headteacher said, 'no-one falls off the computer here'. Pupils find their place in a welcoming building, with friendly adults everywhere. In lessons, the teachers seem to remember everything; the good answer last week, the work not quite understood yesterday. If things go wrong, whether at school or at home, something happens quickly. The school knows who might be able to help, and makes sure that they do. Parents have nothing but praise for the school and delighted with what it offers their children.

24 The school's involvement of pupils in its work is impressive. Pupils are at ease in adult company whilst showing good levels of respect. They talk freely to visitors and staff, are clearly proud of the school and feel their opinions are respected. On a more formal level, there is an effective school council. This group has been involved in many changes and improvements in recent years, including the current major changes to the outside area. The council goes beyond merely making suggestions, for example, pupils recently joined a

site meeting with local authority building inspectors. These were soon put on the spot by pupils' getting straight to the point and asking 'how you would feel if you had to use our toilets?' Action soon followed.

25 The school promotes the long-term well being of its pupils by encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Water is available throughout the day and there is always fruit and salad available at lunch times. Pupils are encouraged to bring healthy snacks to school and are well aware of which foods they should be eating. At lunchtime pupils can choose a healthy option from the school menu. Physical activity, particularly through dance and drama classes encourages pupils towards healthy and enjoyable exercise.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Pupils benefit from the very good links that the school promotes with other schools, the local and wider community and from its very effective partnership with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school tries very hard to give parents the skills they need to help their children learn.
- Parents are given a wealth of information about their children's progress and the curriculum.
- Pupils benefit enormously from the school being at the hub of the local community.

Commentary

26 The school makes very good use of funding from the *Excellence in Cities* project to create a space where parents can feel comfortable in school and more importantly, where they can join in with 'family learning' classes aimed at giving them the skills to help their children at home. These classes are run by an enthusiastic teacher who has succeeded in bringing parents into the school who might otherwise not have made the effort because of their own negative school experience. The classes are increasing in popularity and parents who have attended take them very seriously. One said that she was working very hard towards her examination and was hopeful of gaining a qualification. Pupils benefit from this initiative because parents have a better idea of how to help them with homework and reading. During the inspection it was evident that staff take the time to talk with parents at the start and end of the day and know them well.

27 Parents are kept very well informed about what is happening in school. They receive regular letters from the headteacher and there are notice boards in and outside of the school where they can catch up on events and news. Each year, parents are given written and detailed reports of their children's progress and attainment. Parents say that these are very helpful because they let them know what their children can do in each subject. The parents or carers of pupils who have special educational needs are always invited to take part in review meetings where their children's progress is discussed and targets are set for further work.

28 The sustained efforts of staff and governors have helped make the school a focus point for the community. Teachers work closely with staff from the Sure Start project, which is housed in an adjacent building and this is beginning to pay dividends in the attainment of children when they start nursery. Governors have their fingers in many pies and bring their wide local knowledge and expertise to the school so that pupils benefit from the contact they have with the local church and elderly residents as well as visits to nearby 'superstores'. It is this contact with the community that helps raise pupils' self esteem and prepares them for later life. Teachers make sure that pupils join with other schools in music festivals and events. Pupils who are gifted or talented benefit from links with the local

secondary school and all pupils benefit from the school's efforts to make their transition to the next stage of education as smooth as possible. As a result, pupils in Year 6 say that they are confident about making the move.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher is an inspirational leader and senior staff lead the school extremely well. Management is very effective and the governance of the school is very good. Barriers to learning are overcome by the very good support that pupils receive from teachers and other staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher inspires and motivates staff, pupils, governors and parents.
- Senior staff work extremely well as a team and this gives the school the capacity to go on improving.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas for development.

Commentary

29 The headteacher's leadership continues to be outstanding and underpins many of the changes that have helped the school improve at a good rate and since the previous inspection. A particular strength of his leadership is the ability to inspire teachers and to let them take risks and try out new schemes and projects. This has led to many successful and effective initiatives in the past few years. For example, innovative ideas such as introducing a theatre area have had a significant impact on pupils' enjoyment of school and on their enthusiasm for drama, which in turn is helping to raise standards in speaking and listening. Governors are challenged by the many demands made on the budget but recognise that they all help to improve the quality of provision. A measure of how they are inspired by the headteacher is the way they have tackled the issue of workforce remodelling so successfully. Pupils are equally motivated by the headteacher and know that he has high expectations of them. They are proud when given the chance to show him their work or go to his room for praise. In part this is because the headteacher knows every pupil and they in turn feel that they are important and valued in school. When asked, parents said that the headteacher runs the school very well and that he is always available to talk over any of their problems or concerns. Several parents have been inspired to join family learning classes or take up further training and some have become governors because they love the atmosphere in the school. It is a measure of the headteacher's success that the site manager and non-teaching staff are as committed to the school's success as governors and teachers.

30 The senior management team is a powerful force for change. One of the key features of why this level of leadership and management is so successful is that the headteacher encourages staff to show initiative and become part of projects that interest and stimulate their own educational thinking. Taking their lead from the headteacher they have introduced innovative elements to the curriculum that take into account the guidance in *Excellence and Enjoyment*. Staff with leadership and management responsibilities are very effective. They have a thorough understanding of their roles and carry them out diligently. Everyone keeps up to date through training and association with professional bodies and other educationalists. As a result, teachers are well informed and able to train and help their colleagues and morale is extremely high.

31 Governors are active in their support and work on behalf of the school. They work closely with teachers, ensuring that the school fulfils all its statutory requirements, such as implementing a race equality policy, and contribute to many of the other policies that underpin the school's success. Governors keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and the breadth of the curriculum. They do this by going into the school to see for themselves and by requesting regular reports and information from the headteacher and co-ordinators. As a result, they are very well informed about every aspect of the school's work and have used this knowledge to help staff set relevant priorities for further development and improvement. Governors share the same long-term view of how the school should develop and have wisely husbanded money to ensure that staffing levels remain constant in the next year and that there is sufficient money to continue to provide the many first-hand experiences that pupils enjoy. This is the reason for the larger than average carry-over in the budget. Governors rightly feel that this is justified because of the significant contribution that teaching assistants make to the quality of provision and the benefits that pupils gain in their personal and academic achievement.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	709,511	Balance from previous year	49,029
Total expenditure	696,220	Balance carried forward to the next	62,320
Expenditure per pupil	2,439		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32 Very good leadership and management have resulted in improvements to the nursery so that the provision is now very good. Children benefit from a rich curriculum based on practical activities and close links with parents and carers. Teaching and learning are very good and consequently children of all abilities achieve very well, despite their very low attainment when they start school.

33 Insufficient evidence was gathered to form overall judgements about provision or on children's knowledge and understanding of the world, or in physical and creative development. These areas of learning were sampled by observing children at work and play and looking at displays, books and photographs.

34 In **knowledge and understanding of the world** children make comparisons between when they were babies and now. They use computers to draw pictures using pencil, paint and fill tools to create pictures. Children learn about special cultural and religious celebrations. Children in the reception class made Diwali lamps when learning about this Hindu festival.

35 In **physical development** nursery children have regular opportunities to play outdoors each day and all the children use the school hall for physical activities. Nursery children play on tricycles and wheeled vehicles with due consideration and use of space. All the children have healthy snacks each day, and reception children are aware of the impact of exercise on their bodies.

36 In **creative development** children regularly paint and they learn how to mix colours. They have many opportunities to practice using scissors. Children enjoy a good

selection of imaginative play activities, such as acting as travel agents or dentists. All the children have worked with experts from the Sage Music Centre in Gateshead, and they have regular opportunities to make music and sing songs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults are very good role models and expect children to behave well.
- Children are encouraged to make choices and to be independent.

Commentary

37 The main reason why teaching in this area of learning is very good is that all of the adults in the Foundation Stage are fine role models for children. They treat children with respect and are interested in their well-being and development. Children know that their views are valued by adults and consequently they quickly come out of their shells and start to talk more confidently about themselves. Watching adults handle the equipment and toys carefully gives children a clear message that this is something they should also do. When this doesn't happen a quiet word is generally all that is needed to restore good behaviour. At all times, adults are polite and well mannered and they never lose patience. Children emulate this behaviour and after only a short time they learn to say 'please' and 'thank you' and there is very little squabbling over games and equipment.

38 Staff encourage children to get what they need and do things for themselves. There are times each day when children choose their own activities and more formal times when they work with an adult to plan what they want to do. As they get older they are given greater responsibility and learn to organise themselves by getting the equipment they need, putting on an apron and going to the toilet. As a result, children gain independence and confidence though few are set to reach the early goals by the end of reception.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff consistently promote children's speaking and listening skills.
- There are very good opportunities for children to develop skills in reading and writing.

Commentary

39 Many children start nursery with communication, language and literacy skills that are very poor. Though very good teaching ensures that they achieve very well, few children are set to reach the early goals by the end of reception. One of the main reasons why children achieve so well is that adults constantly encourage them to join in conversations and talk about themselves and their work. When working with small groups of children, adults ask questions that encourage children to think about what they are doing and communicate this to others. In the nursery, children talk to others about the things they need and in reception classes children are confident enough to initiate conversations, and take on the roles of the people they pretend to be in imaginative play.

40 Teachers plan many opportunities for children to read and write in all areas of learning. The high ratio of adults enables children to be taught effectively in small groups where they learn new words and are encouraged to listen carefully and to answer questions. Staff use their knowledge of assessment very well to match questions to individual children's abilities. However, many children are hesitant talking about their ideas and are indistinct when talking to adults. They enjoy browsing through books, regularly choose books from the library and enjoy listening to stories such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Children are encouraged to recognise the letter sounds in their own names, and higher attaining children are challenged well to start using this knowledge to write their own names and words. Even though children are taught how to form letters and sometimes copy over adults' writing, in reception some children use capital and lower case letters incorrectly. For example, writing 'and' as 'AnD'.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from a rich mathematics curriculum and as a result, children are keen to take part in number activities and consequently, they achieve well.
- Children get opportunities to work with numbers every day in small groups and as a class.

Commentary

41 When they start nursery most children have very poor skills or understanding of mathematics and although they achieve very well they are unlikely to reach the early goals by the end of reception. One of the main reasons why teaching is very good is that activities are planned to give children a broad and stimulating curriculum. The activities are practical and involve children in repeated counting, measuring and looking at shapes and space. Children enjoy this method of teaching and are keen to take part. For example, children getting ready for a physical education lesson, counted how many of them were sitting on the carpet and how many more were needed before they all went into the hall. Whilst they make very good gains in counting, too many children have difficulty expressing their understanding. For example, a higher attaining group of children in reception class needed a lot of support to explain their reasons for ordering three numbers from the smallest to the largest.

42 A further strength of the teaching is that many activities each day involve identifying and writing numbers. In the nursery children learn about numbers through songs and rhymes and in the reception class they begin to record their work more formally. Children are taught to write numerals, but several children in reception class reverse numbers, such as three and five.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make effective use of the National Literacy Strategy to teach grammar and punctuation.

- Good leadership and management have resulted in the school tackling the issue of girls doing better than boys.
- Though teaching is good the strategies used to teach reading are not effective enough.
- Handwriting is not taught well enough.
- Teachers are very good at promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

43 Teaching is good overall but the teaching of reading and handwriting could be better. When they start in Year 1, few pupils read at the level expected for their age and the current methods of teaching are not enabling them to make the progress they need to catch up. At the start of each day pupils in all classes are expected to read and each day teachers read with a small group. This is not enough, especially as many pupils say that they do not regularly read at home. As a result, standards in all year groups remain well below those expected and without changes to the current methods of teaching they are unlikely to rise.

44 The teaching of handwriting is inconsistent and this is reflected in standards that fall below those expected in all year groups. In Years 1 and 2, too little emphasis is given to forming letters correctly or using an agreed style. As a result, many pupils in Year 2 put capital letters into words that do not need them, letters that should be written below the line are not and tall and short letters are often the same size. Though a small number of pupils in Year 2 are beginning to join letters when writing in a handwriting book, none do this in their everyday writing. A key feature of why pupils' handwriting lacks style and fluency in Years 3 to 6, is that teachers do not always set the right example in their own writing. For example, when writing on the board some teachers print rather than write and there is not a shared script used by teachers throughout the school. Though teachers occasionally make comments about handwriting when marking pupils' work, very often this is overlooked in favour of marking that rightly reflects the aim of the lesson. This means that by the end of Year 6, few pupils write well, their written work is too often untidy and standards are well below those expected.

45 Good leadership and management have ensured that reading and handwriting have been identified as key priorities for development. The co-ordinator has also identified the gap in attainment between girls and boys and staff have been quick to do something about it. The school has joined a local initiative aimed at raising the achievement of boys and, with enthusiastic leadership from senior staff, teachers have set about finding out why boys fall behind and what their reading habits and preferences are, in order to then tackle the source of the problem. This reflects the school's good capacity for improvement.

46 The teaching of speaking and listening is very good and helps pupils gain confidence and widen their vocabulary as they get older. However, many pupils have very limited vocabularies when they start school and this continues to inhibit their confidence to talk about themselves and their work as they get older. Teachers are relentless in their attempts to promote discussion in lessons. Sometimes this is between pairs of pupils, for example, when they have to discuss a character or plot briefly with a partner. On other occasions, pupils answer thought provoking questions posed by teachers. However, many pupils answer questions with short phrases or single words. Teachers also provide opportunities for pupils to speak in larger groups such as in school concerts. The older pupils say that they get a little bit nervous sometimes but that they enjoy taking part. Despite the best efforts of teachers pupils attainment remain well below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

47 The school makes good use of funding from the Excellence in Cities and Education Action Zone initiatives to promote pupils' and parents' literacy skills. Family learning classes aim to give parents the skills that they need to help their children with reading and writing at home. The pupils and families of asylum seekers, refugees and those who do not speak English at home are given extra help with English. These parents say that they value this help.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48 Pupils make good use of their language and literacy skills in other subjects. They read books, articles and Internet web sites to research facts in history and geography and read instructions on worksheets in a number of subjects. Many lessons involve question and answer sessions or discussions when pupils are expected to give their points of view and where they talk about their work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, so pupils enjoy lessons, work hard and make very good progress.
- Subject leadership is very good. This has helped in creating an effective staff team.
- Mental and oral mathematics are taught very well.
- Teachers train pupils to think about how well they are doing, and how they can improve.

Commentary

49 Pupils are achieving very well in mathematics. This is mainly due to the teaching, which is consistently very good and sometimes excellent. Subject leadership is also very good, the school has improved steadily since the last inspection. In the 2004 national tests for Year 6, the school achieved its best ever results. Standards then were above average and well above those seen in similar schools. More than half of the pupils reached a higher level than is usual at this age. Standards in the present Year 6 have not reached these dizzy heights; this is because of cohort differences; the high proportion of pupils who start school after the reception class. Standards this year are below the national average. Nevertheless, the school's thorough assessment records show that all these pupils, including those with learning needs, have achieved very well from a low starting point when they joined the school.

50 Lessons in all classes are lively and stimulating. Teachers keep everyone involved through clear explanations, searching questions, and carefully planned work that builds on what the pupils already understand. The teachers expect a lot, but they are very good at giving pupils confidence and boosting their self-esteem. Consequently pupils are keen to be involved, show what they can do and earn some praise.

51 These teaching strengths are particularly evident in the oral parts of lessons. Teachers manage these with considerable flair and expertise, often making very good use of technology to promote understanding. Pupils of all abilities enjoy this work and know they can contribute without fear of failure. A daily dose of challenging mental work is helping them to gather a good store of number facts and a range of strategies to use these in tackling new work.

Example of outstanding practice

This is an example of how the teacher motivated and challenged pupils and gave them the confidence to develop their mathematical thinking.

The teacher demands blood in this session. He uses every moment to motivate, take ideas further, demonstrate, make links and then asks the children to amaze him. This works so well that at one point he heads for the corridor, feigning despair at not being needed anymore. Needless to say the class are entranced, behaviour is perfect and pennies are dropping all over the place on multiplication, division, and ways to find the answers. The outstanding trust and relationships are unmistakable. Despite the cracking pace, the teacher picks up on every gain; lots of praise makes everyone feel special. Even a shy half-raised arm gets a quiet word of encouragement. Confident use of mathematics software on the interactive board helps to keep all this together. Not flashy special effects, but chosen to bring numbers to life and drive the class towards new learning.

52 One of the reasons for the pupils' good involvement and productivity is that teachers treat them as responsible partners in learning. For example, teachers begin lessons by sharing the things they hope pupils will achieve. They constantly refer to these, to keep everyone on track. Teachers close lessons well, reflecting on how things have gone and what is needed next. For example, pupils enjoy judging their own performance on a *traffic light* system. All of this is backed up by effective marking and the use of individual targets. Pupils in this school have a good picture of their own strengths and weaknesses and this is helping them to move on.

53 Subject leadership, and teamwork, is very good. This has helped to improve all aspects of teaching and learning. For example, teachers have worked together very well to make sure that pupils experience similar methods, vocabulary and routines in all classes. This is particularly successful for pupils who are uncertain about mathematics, or find it hard to concentrate and remember new ideas. Teachers feel that some inspiring support from the local advisory service has also made a difference. Overall the school does very well for its pupils. However, there is a desire to do even better. There are well-established systems to look critically at teaching and learning, to see how standards might improve further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54 Pupils make good use of mathematics in subjects such as science, geography or design and technology. This helps them to see the practical uses of their skills. However, in some cases this could be taken further. Pupils often collect interesting data from their science experiments but some chances are missed to get more from their discoveries, for example, in spotting trends or making accurate predictions. There is regular use of computers in mathematics, for example, in graphs and spreadsheets. The increasing use of the interactive screens means that pupils are becoming familiar with a wide range of ways to present mathematical ideas.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection.
- Though teachers encourage pupils to use scientific terms when explaining and recording their findings this does not always happen.
- Pupils achieve very well because they enjoy work that involves experimenting and investigating.
- The curriculum is enriched substantially through educational visits.

Commentary

55 Very good teaching enables pupils to achieve very well. However, standards remain below those expected by Year 2 and Year 6 because pupils have such a long way to go from a very low starting point.

56 Since the previous inspection, teachers have taken advantage of training and begun to use information and communication technology very creatively to motivate pupils. As a result, the quality of teaching is now very good and this has had a corresponding impact on pupils' achievement, which is also very good. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of how to teach science and use this to plan interesting and exciting lessons. For example, pupils in Year 2, were interested in their work because the teacher told them their decisions about the best light sources would help him climb mountains.

57 Standards are brought down by the fact that pupils' limited language prevents them from recording their work in any detail. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils understand and use scientific terms and vocabulary in their work. At the start of lessons, they remind pupils of the words they need to use in their work and there are often useful displays and a wide range of information books to further promote pupils' use of language. However, pupils' limited language skills often prevents them from explaining or recording their work in any depth. For example, following an experiment to test how materials change a pupil in Year 6 was not able to make a prediction beyond 'I think it will sink'.

58 All groups of pupils have equal opportunities to take part in the lessons and they say that finding things out and predicting what might happen in experiments is one of the things they best like about science lessons. One of the reasons why pupils of all abilities achieve very well is that teachers recognise that pupils in this school learn best from investigating and experimenting. In Years 1 and 2 pupils follow suggestions made by adults but although pupils in Years 3 to 6 are encouraged to devise their own experiments few can do this without support from the teacher. This method of teaching pays several dividends.

59 Very good leadership and management has resulted in the curriculum being enriched through a number of educational visits where pupils gain first-hand experience of science and scientific concepts. Pupils in Year 3 took part in a science fayre held at the local secondary school. They interacted with the public sharing with them examples of work they had been doing. In Years 5 and 6, pupils made several visits to the Life Science Centre in Newcastle to support learning in their topic about sound. Some Year 6 pupils said they particularly enjoyed visiting the *Starlab* at the local secondary school, and that this visit helped them learn more about the universe.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is much better than it was. Weaknesses from the last inspection have been put right.
- Teachers are using the interactive screens very effectively. This is helping to raise standards.
- There is good, thorough teaching of the basic skills in information and communication technology. However the school has now reached a stage where more independent work can be encouraged.

- Very good leadership by the co-ordinators has been a significant factor in the drive for improvement.

Commentary

60 The school has made great strides since the previous inspection and as a result, pupils achieve very well and standards have risen substantially. By Year 2 and Year 6, pupils are now working at the levels expected for their age. They use word processing and graphics programmes confidently and can search the Internet sensibly. The older pupils know how to use spreadsheets and databases and can present information attractively using sound, moving images and words. They use control software to link a series of events, for example, to operate traffic lights. Standards are higher, and still rising, because the school has invested very well in equipment and teachers' knowledge and confidence is much better. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving very well. Boys and girls enjoy lessons and do equally well.

61 Teaching is very good overall. Teachers plan lessons carefully from a high quality programme. They are using electronic screens very well to demonstrate new work, or to celebrate what pupils have done. Consequently, pupils are developing their skills and confidence each year. For example, they learn to programme a floor turtle in the nursery, but by Year 3 are able to give more complex instructions and use what they know to control a screen device. By Years 5 and 6 they use technology successfully to control the lights in a model house. Pupils in Year 1 make a good start in presenting information, for example, some are able to organise their writing into bullet points. By the time they reach Year 6, they can put together an impressive multimedia presentation, for example, on the life of John Lennon.

62 Teaching is methodical and very well prepared. Pupils move step-by-step in learning new skills, and teachers support them very well if they run into problems. This approach has been successful in bringing pupils up to a minimum standard. However, it sometimes restricts learning. In some lessons, pupils could make more progress if they had more time to practise and explore. In most of the lessons seen, the teachers' explanations and instructions took too long. The school has achieved so much since the last inspection, that teachers should now be able to encourage independence and give pupils more responsibility. Pupils like this and work seriously. For example, in Year 2, most managed the first task in their Internet search very quickly; there was no stopping them after that as the teacher challenged them to keep refining their search and discover more.

63 Leadership, by the headteacher and co-ordinators is very good. Everything is in place to continue improving standards yet the team believes that they have only just begun. Plans are well advanced to use technology in pioneering ways, for example, in linking learning in classrooms and communicating with other schools. All the adults in the school were funded recently to look at the use of information and communication technology in schools in New York. This says a great deal about the vision and aspirations of the leadership team.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64 Pupils make good use of their information and communication technology skills in other subjects. In Year 4, for example, pupils use spreadsheets and databases to examine their science data. Search engines are used to gather information, for example, when pupils in Year 5 and 6 study a theme park in geography, or the sixties decade in history. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. The exciting use of interactive screens, linked to the Internet, is enhancing

pupils' information and communication technology skills and learning in many other subjects.

HUMANITIES

65 In geography and history insufficient evidence was gathered to form overall judgements about provision. These subjects were sampled by observing a small number of lessons, talking with pupils about their work and looking at books and displays.

66 In **geography**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have studied the physical features of the seaside and followed the travels of Barnaby Bear to explore Brazil and its climate. When studying the local area pupils have considered physical features such as the safety of the road outside of school. Older pupils have studied their own locality and contrasting areas in the Borders and in Angola. A key feature of the curriculum is the way links are made with other subjects. Pupils also benefit from educational visits to study geography at first-hand. They feel that these visits 'help you to learn'.

67 In **history**, pupils in Year 2 talk excitedly about a visit to a local history museum where they had dressed and pretended to be Victorian children. This had brought the subject to life and it was subsequently recorded in a lively and stimulating display of their work and photographs. Educational visits are a key feature of the curriculum with pupils visiting a Roman fort, Bede's World, where they dressed as monks and wrote in the scriptorium. Older pupils learn to empathise with people in the past as they study World War II and they say that all of the history they study is 'interesting and fun'. Pupils' work shows that they understand some of the politics behind World War II and that they know how to research historical facts from a range of sources.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know a lot about the religions taught and plan a vibrant and exciting curriculum.
- Interesting lessons make the work relevant to pupils' lives, and so promote very good attitudes to religious belief.
- Collective worship times are an important feature of the school as a community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through religious education.

Commentary

68 Teaching is very good overall and pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Teachers know the syllabus used in local schools very well and ensure that the curriculum is brought to life through educational visits and the way that they encourage people from other cultures to visit the school. For example, pupils of all ages learn about Christianity through regular visits by a local church minister and visitors to the school help bring Judaism to life by talking about how Jews live and worship.

69 Teachers make lessons interesting and relevant. A strength is the way that teachers relate the activities to pupils' own experiences and feelings. There are good examples of this in pupils' writing and pictures about special places or people. Teaching like this means that pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to learn more. Teachers also use a

variety of effective strategies to engage pupils. For example, when telling the parable of the 'five thousand' the teacher used drama to help pupils in Years 3 and 4 empathise with Jesus and the crowd.

70 Lessons in religious education make a significant contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. In many lessons they are asked to think about the rights and wrongs of stories or parables from the religions they study and this helps them develop their own moral code. They begin to consider how religions have many things in common and talked about light playing a key part in Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. Pupils say that they enjoy learning about other religions and the lack of racial incidents or harassment in the school is a reflection of the tolerance and respect for others that they develop as part of their learning. This was evident when pupils in Year 6 reflected on a bad sharing experience and how their feelings might affect their ability to forgive others. Though most pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reach the levels prescribed by the syllabus their limited reading skills occasionally prevent them from researching further. Teachers work hard to overcome this by ensuring that more time is spent in discussion and listening rather than recording what they know. This ensures that pupils enjoy lessons and have a very positive attitude to learning about the religions they study.

71 Very good leadership and management have led to improvements to the provision and to pupils' attitudes since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator keeps a close eye on teachers' planning and checks the quality of teaching. Any areas for development are shared with staff who strive constantly to improve the quality of teaching. One of the results of monitoring is that corridors and classrooms now contain high quality displays of pupils' work and religious objects. Pupils are keen to stop and look at these and to talk about their symbolism and use. Very effective use has been made of a local religious education consultant who has delivered training to staff on a variety of approaches to the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72 In art and design, design and technology, music and physical education insufficient work was seen to form firm judgements about provision. These subjects were sampled by observing a small number of lessons, talking with pupils about their work and looking at books and displays.

73 The school's provision for **art and design** reflects the awards that it has gained for its work in this subject. High quality displays of pupils' work are displayed in classrooms and corridors and show how art and design is used to show off pupils' work in all subjects and to promote pupils' awareness of art and design in other cultures. Pupils work with fabrics, paints and clay to create lively and colourful pictures such as the ones illustrating the labours of Hercules. The curriculum is enriched by the work that pupils have done with a local sculptor, which has resulted in some fabulous wooden sculptures that are displayed in school and form part of the outdoor garden and learning area. Pupils say that they are very proud of these and they enjoy playing around them at break. The art club is very popular with pupils and also enriches the curriculum.

74 Pupils said that they enjoy the making in **design and technology** better than the designing or evaluating. They certainly favour the food technology side of the subject and talked about making fruit salads and sandwiches. The curriculum is broad and includes opportunities to use a wide range of materials including information and communication technology. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make models of windmills and create a coat of many colours for Joseph. The models generally resemble designs and pupils evaluate them by choice of a smiley face or otherwise. Older pupils learn about structures and mechanism and make monsters that move using pneumatic devices. Each year pupils take part in a

design and technology project with the local secondary school. This sets a challenge and helps a number of pupils in Year 6 get to know the school that they transfer to.

75 The **music** curriculum is planned to ensure that skills are taught in a systematic way. The school takes up every opportunity to promote pupils' learning by inviting experts from outside the school. There are a variety of after school clubs for singing and learning to play musical instruments. Parents are pleased that their children have the chance to play an instrument and pupils are proud of being able to play guitar and the violin. During the inspection, two pupils confidently played a guitar duet in a whole school assembly. Pupils have regular opportunities to sing in assemblies and to perform in concerts.

76 **Physical education** is a popular subject with girls and boys. All the required parts of the National Curriculum are taught, including swimming and dance and the school has gained a Space for Sports award and an Active Mark award for its work in this area. From the small parts of lessons seen during the inspection, pupils know to behave sensibly and work together safely. They show a typical range of ability in games and gymnastic skills. Parents are happy with the range of after-school clubs, including judo, netball, basketball, football and rugby and these are popular with pupils. Some specialist coaches visit regularly, and there are useful sporting links with the secondary school. Pupils have several opportunities to go on residential visits and they say that these are 'great fun'.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

77 The school's provision for promoting pupils' **personal, social and health education and citizenship** was sampled by talking with pupils and observing a small number of lessons. Pupils' personal and social development is promoted in everything that the school does and through the very close relationships that teachers forge with pupils. In addition to this, pupils follow a formal programme of lessons, which focus on being healthy, staying safe, making a positive contribution to the community and learning to manage money; all of which reflect the outcomes in *Every Child Matters*. Through circle time and discussions pupils confront and learn to deal with many of the issues that they will face as adults and they are encouraged to make sensible choices about lifestyle, growing up, sex and relationships. In discussions pupils talked about the dangers involved with smoking and the misuse of drugs and alcohol and the advantages of healthy eating and exercise. Parents feel that their children gain confidence and maturity during their time in school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
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	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
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).