

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CASTLESIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Castleside, Consett

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114043

Headteacher: Mrs A E Charlton

Lead inspector: Miss L Hunter

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Inspection number: 266576

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 116

School address: Moorland Crescent  
Castleside  
Consett  
County Durham  
Postcode: DH8 9RG

Telephone number: 01207 508 237  
Fax number: 01207 508 237

Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr P Evans

Date of previous inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> June 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Castleside Primary is a smaller than average school serving the village community of Castleside close to Consett in County Durham. There are significant fluctuations in the size of each year group which mean that some children are taught in mixed age classes, and the composition of these changes each year. There is a distinct imbalance in the number of boys and girls in some year groups.

The school is attracting an increasing number of pupils from outside the immediate area. The school is also receiving increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs, including recent intakes of pupils with statements of specific needs into different year groups. As a result, the level of special educational needs in the school as a whole is above average although in some of the smaller year groups this proportion is significantly higher. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school has a mix of pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds but none require support for English as an additional language.

When children start in the reception class their attainment is broadly average although in reality there is a very wide variation in what they can actually do.

The school has come through an unsettling period where there have been changes to the senior management, including the appointment of a new headteacher. Some class teachers work part-time, some subjects are taught by additional part-time teachers and the

new headteacher also has a part-time teaching commitment. The school has received a School Achievement Award (2003) and Basic Skills Award (2004).

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3277	Miss L Hunter	Lead inspector	Science
			Information and communication technology
			Physical education
			English as an additional language
12511	Mrs L Buller	Lay inspector	
30834	Mrs A Lowson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			Mathematics
			Music
			Religious education
11510	Mr K Oglesby	Team inspector	English
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Geography
			History
			Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>7</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>27</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a fairly effective school.** Teaching and learning are satisfactory and sometimes good with the result that pupils make at least satisfactory progress in most subjects. By the time they leave the school pupils have achieved well in English and very well in mathematics but their standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are too low.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- High standards and very good achievement in mathematics by Year 6.
- High standards and good achievement in English by Year 6.
- Standards in ICT are too low and ICT is not used well enough to support learning in other subjects.
- Good links with the local community, parents and other schools that help enrich the curriculum.
- Good moral and social development for pupils.
- The outdoor facilities for the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory and affect the opportunities offered to the youngest children.
- The school's self-evaluation is not rigorous enough yet to have a specific focus on improving pupils' achievement.

The school has made satisfactory improvement in most areas since the last inspection although ICT remains a problem due to a lack of sufficient equipment. The new headteacher has identified the correct areas to tackle and, with the support of staff and governors, is starting to take actions that should reap benefits in the future. Parents and pupils think highly of the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The school's results vary considerably each year because the number of pupils taking the tests varies and is often quite small, and some groups have more pupils with special educational needs than others. This means that the performance of one pupil is often quite significant and makes analysis of the trends in the school's results unreliable. Standards in English and mathematics have definitely improved over recent years and are being sustained at a high level, which is confirmed by the school's receipt of a School Achievement Award in 2003 and a Basic Skills Award in 2004. Standards in science are satisfactory.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	C	A	A
mathematics	E	B	B	B
science	E	B	C	C

*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 satisfactory overall.** Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. They are on course

to reach appropriate levels in all areas of learning by the end of their reception year but limitations on the outdoor facilities available affect the way the classroom is organised and the range of activities that are offered. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory through the rest of the school but accelerates in Year 6, which is where they do particularly well. In Year 6, pupils are achieving well in English and very well in mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory in science and religious education but unsatisfactory in ICT where pupils of all ages could do better if they were given greater access to computers and more opportunities to learn and practice their skills.

Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support from a team of staff who work well with the class teachers. As a result, these pupils hold their own and match the progress of their classmates. However, specific groups of pupils with behavioural needs sometimes play up during lessons and, if additional adult support is not readily available, this has an impact on the quality and pace of learning for other pupils in the class. On the other hand, pupils with statements associated to physical and learning needs often make good progress and achieve well in the key areas of literacy and numeracy.

Pupils' attendance is very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are polarised with the vast majority showing very good interest in their work and behaving well but there is a small group of boys in each key stage that regularly display immature and attention seeking behaviour. Most other pupils show remarkable tolerance of these boys even when their misbehaviour affects the pace of learning in the classes. This is one reason why pupils' achievements are satisfactory, when on some occasions they could be better.

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory.** Their moral and social development are strengths because they have plenty of opportunities to work as part of a school community and they develop a strong sense of citizenship through links with the local community. The active school council is a particular feature of the way pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and contribute to decisions that affect their school. However, pupils' spiritual and cultural development could be better. This is because opportunities are often missed during lessons and assemblies where they could experience time for thought and reflection, and where different cultural influences could be introduced.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory** and sometimes good, and are particularly good in Year 6. Teaching is not as stimulating or vibrant as it could be for a number of reasons, including the fact that the physical arrangement of the accommodation hinders opportunities and allows noise from adjacent classes to disturb lessons. The accommodation has limitations and this is a barrier that is affecting pupils' achievements. Similarly, many of the school's resources and equipment look tired and need to be revitalised to add an extra spark to the way teachers can present their lessons. On the other hand, when teaching is good, and when additional adults are available to support groups of pupils in the classroom, the pupils respond well and are keen to succeed in their work. The curriculum is satisfactory with a good range of extra-curricular activities and good enrichment provided by visits and visitors. For example, pupils have opportunities to try out a particularly wide range of sports, including team games, golf and judo. However, there is insufficient time given to ICT, which is why standards are too low in this subject and why ICT is not used as well as it could be to support pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**



**Leadership and management are satisfactory.** The school has come through an unsettling phase but the very recent appointment of a new headteacher has set it back on track. The school's leaders have got the big picture right and have identified what needs to happen to make things change for the better. This understanding has tended to come about through intuition and informal monitoring rather than sharply focused probing and analysis of data available to the school to pinpoint what is actually happening in the classrooms for different groups of pupils. Critical self-evaluation is not embedded firmly enough yet but governors and the new headteacher have recognised the key priorities for the school and are starting to channel funds and resources into improving these areas. Governors are ensuring that the school meet statutory requirements. The school's systems and procedures are secure and it is being managed effectively to handle the issues of mixed age classes and varying pupil numbers each year, including the financial implications this fluctuation inevitably brings.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents have positive views of the school and feel it is doing a good job for their children. The pupils are proud of their school and enjoy being part of it. They particularly like the way they feel they can influence what happens through their school council.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Put a systematic and rigorous programme of monitoring in place to help the school's leaders accurately and consistently evaluate the factors affecting pupils' learning, and to inform their decisions about how and where to target resources to promote better achievement.
- Raise standards in ICT by giving pupils more access to computers and increase their opportunities to learn the skills they need to a greater depth.
- Give pupils more opportunities to use ICT to support their learning in other subjects.
- Improve the outdoor facilities for children in the Foundation Stage.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Children make a steady start in the Foundation Stage and achieve well in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Pupils make sufficient progress in most subjects and this accelerates in Year 6 where, by the age of 11, they attain well in English and very well in mathematics. Standards in ICT are not high enough across the school.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High standards and very good achievement in mathematics by Year 6.
- High standards and good achievement in English by Year 6.
- Standards in ICT are too low and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

#### **Commentary**

1 Some of the school's year groups are very small. This means that the number of pupils who sit the national tests fluctuates considerably from year to year, which makes statistical comparisons of the school's performance data difficult and, in some instance unreliable.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (14.6)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.6 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.4 (15.9)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2 The Year 2 table shows that, in the 2004 national tests for seven year olds, pupils attained standards that were above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. When these results were compared to similar schools, this picture remained the same. Over recent years, the school's trend in performance at age seven has been below the national trend but this has been influenced by significant variations in the make up of the Year 2 classes and by a dip in performance a couple of years ago when a large group of pupils with special educational needs sat the tests. On the basis of the school's own assessments, the current Year 2 pupils are unlikely to reach the same levels of performance as last years pupils, especially in writing which is their weaker area.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (27.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.9 (28.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.9 (29.9)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3 The Year 6 table shows that, in the 2004 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils attained standards in English that were well above average. Their standards in mathematics were above

average and in science they were average. Again, when these results were compared to similar schools, this profile remained the same. The school's trend in performance at age 11 has been below the national trend over recent years but this can be attributed to a number of factors. Two years ago, the performance of the Year 6 pupils at the time was particularly low and this contributed to a dip in the school's trend. Also, the number of pupils in Year 6 is often very small, which means that one pupil carries a high weighting factor when the school's results are analysed and used to make statistical comparisons of this kind. The current Year 6 pupils are achieving well in English and very well in mathematics. The school's own assessments suggest that they will reach high standards in both these subjects when this year's test results are published.

4 The school has received a Basic Skills Award and this reflects its strengths in the key areas of English and mathematics. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in developing their key skills in language, literacy and communication, and mathematical development. This follows through into Years 1 and 2 where pupils build steadily on their literacy and numeracy skills. In the current Year 2, most pupils are reaching satisfactory levels in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics. Standards in writing do not match this – although a small number write fluently and imaginatively, a significant proportion have limited vocabulary, erratic spelling and punctuation, and find it hard to write more than a few simple sentences without help. Pupils continue to make steady progress as they move through Key Stage 2 and this accelerates in Year 6, where the current group of pupils are achieving particularly well. This boost to pupils' progress in Year 6 is a strong contributory factor to the school's high results in English and mathematics in the last couple of years, and it is well placed to continue to promote high standards in these subjects.

5 Pupils do not do as well in the science tests at age 11 as they do in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, standards in science are satisfactory. Standards in ICT are too low. The school does not have enough equipment to give pupils sufficient time or opportunity to develop their skills. As a result, children in the Foundation Stage start to get an idea of how to use computers at a simple level but, by the time they reach age seven, pupils have not grasped all the different things they could do. In particular, they have limited understanding of how to hold information on a computer and, although they have done it before, pupils have patchy knowledge of how to combine a picture and simple text. By the age of 11, pupils have not had enough time on the computers to refine or develop their skills sufficiently. The curriculum is organised carefully to give them a brief overview of each area required, and what they are taught is done satisfactorily, but their knowledge and understanding is often too superficial. As a result, pupils are not achieving as well as they could and standards are below where they should be. Pupils do not have all the skills they need to be able to use ICT to support their work in other subjects.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall but this ranges from very good in Year 6 to occasionally unsatisfactory for some groups of boys in a couple of classes. Attendance is very good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy being part of a community and develop strong social skills.
- The school council is a key feature of the school and helps pupils develop a sense of moral responsibility.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well but a small minority of boys challenge boundaries and sometimes disrupt learning.
- Pupils' spiritual and cultural development could be better if more attention was paid to promoting these areas.

### **Commentary**

6 The school has a strong community feel to it, which encompasses parents, pupils and people from the local area. Pupils develop good social skills by taking part in activities that take them beyond the school, such as helping at local coffee mornings and raising money for charities, including the Tsunami Appeal and Red Nose Day. In addition, there is a good range of visits that encourage pupils to develop an awareness of life beyond their immediate locality. For example, younger pupils have visited a farm to see how that differs from their way of life, and Year 6 pupils were preparing themselves for a visit to France immediately after the inspection.

7 The school actively encourages members of the community to visit and take part in the education of the pupils. For instance, a visitor has been into the school to talk about Sikhism and showed pupils a range of religious symbols and artefacts important to Sikh life. This supported the religious education curriculum well but also gave pupils the opportunity to experience a different cultural dimension. A local nurse has also visited the school to work with pupils on health and fitness, and a wide range of sports coaches have helped to provide pupils with a broad experience of activities, including golf, judo and competitive team sports.

8 The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and for them to begin to realise their importance as citizens. Pupils are extremely proud of their school council – and rightly so. This group is very well respected and has done some very positive work in the school. For example, the development of ‘suggestion boxes’ for pupils to use and the implementation of ‘buddy stops’ in the playground. The general school population know that they have a say in the running of their school through their class representatives on the school council, which spans the full age range from reception to Year 6. The school council members themselves take their responsibilities very seriously and appreciate that they are representing the views of their peers and making decisions that could affect the way their school operates. For instance, they have responsibility for a small budget that they know must be used wisely and carefully.

9 Most pupils behave well and take pride in what they do. However, a small group of boys in a couple of classes let the side down. Although some of them have recognised behavioural problems, they do not always show sufficient respect for the teachers and other adults, or concern for how their actions may be affecting their classmates. It is a testament to the majority of pupils that they show such tolerance to these individuals at times. For instance, in several lessons seen during the inspection, these boys deliberately pushed their luck with the teachers and challenged the boundaries that were set for them, to the point that the learning of other pupils in these lessons was affected by their immature attention seeking behaviour. Despite this, the school has strong provision in place to promote pupils’ moral development. For instance, through studies in religious education, PSHE and other areas such as history and geography, pupils learn about the differences between right and wrong, and the impact of peoples’ choices and behaviours on the lives of others.

10 The school has only ever had one incident that has led to a temporary exclusion of a pupil. This was a ‘last resort’ action that received full support from the governors and staff, and which had a positive outcome for everyone concerned.

## **Exclusions**

*Ethnic background of pupils*

*Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	110	1	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0

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

11 Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory but could be better. There are some good elements of these areas delivered through religious education, and the school's range of visits and visitors make a positive contribution. However, there are many missed opportunities in the daily life of the school where pupils could be given experiences to promote their spiritual and cultural awareness further. For example, assemblies can be bland – pupils could have more opportunities to listen to and appreciate background music. Their collective worship is often a short prayer with little or no chance to stop and reflect on issues and messages that are important to them. Areas of the curriculum, such as art and design, history and music could make a much greater impact if closer attention was given to planning for different cultural influences and if time was built into pupils' learning to allow them to consider and appreciate their experiences more fully.

## Attendance

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (96%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.0
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.*

12 Attendance in 2004 was well above the national average, as the above table shows. The figures for 2005 are not quite as high but should still compare favourably. Pupils are punctual and enjoy coming to school.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and sometimes good, and are particularly good in Year 6. Assessment is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers handle the mixed age classes well but assessment could be used more sharply to set expectations and challenge pupils to achieve even more.
- English and mathematics are taught well, especially in Year 6 where pupils' learning accelerates.
- The physical arrangement of the school's accommodation is a barrier to lively teaching and allows noise disruption to lessons.

- Teachers use questions particularly well to probe pupils' understanding and support their learning.
- Learning in two classes is sometimes affected by the behaviour of a small number of pupils.

## Commentary

13 Teachers plan their lessons very carefully and in great detail. This is important to make sure that they teach the right things and accommodate the differing mixed age class arrangements year after year. This is effective because it means that pupils get a balanced curricular diet without any gaps or repetitions as they move through the school. However, because of the attention on the content of what will be delivered, there is a tendency for teachers to focus on what they are going to 'teach' rather than on what they want the children to 'learn'. As a result, this does not always take sufficient account of what pupils already know and understand, and there is sometimes a slight mismatch between what pupils can already do and what they are expected to achieve during the lesson. For example, in some of the lessons seen, higher attaining pupils could have been challenged and pushed a bit further, while in others the work was pitched a fraction too high for some pupils with the result that they struggled to keep up. The small class sizes are a bonus and help teachers and support staff to make regular observations of pupils' achievements. This form of assessment feeds appropriately into pupils' targets for future learning, but the marking of their work is often superficial and gives little feedback on how well they have done or suggestions of how the work could be improved or what needs to be done next.

14 English and mathematics are taught well. This starts in the Foundation Stage where reception children receive effective support for the development of their communication, language, literacy, and mathematical skills. In this class, the teamwork between the teacher and support staff, the use of well directed questions and the organisation of children into small focussed working groups are key features that maximise children's learning opportunities. The teaching of English and mathematics continues to be successful in promoting good learning as pupils progress through the school. The flexible way that classes are arranged helps to ensure that pupils' needs are met in the most efficient and effective way possible. For example, small groups of pupils move out of their own classes to be taught with older pupils at a point where it is felt they will benefit from this additional level of work and challenge. In Year 6, the teaching steps up a gear with the result that pupils' learning accelerates and they achieve well. For instance, in a very good mathematics lesson, pupils were challenged to solve complex problems but were given enough 'thinking' time and just the right degree of adult support by the teacher and support assistant to make sure that they all succeeded in their own way, even though many came to the same answer using different methods.

15 The physical arrangement of the school's accommodation is a barrier to more effective learning. There is a constant background noise that both pupils and staff have learnt to filter out but many of the teachers are so conscious of how easily the noise travels between classrooms that it stifles their approach to some lessons. At times, it is obvious that both staff and pupils are inhibited by this and it does affect the quality of their work. In some lessons, the noise from adjacent classrooms (which is often productive chatter and discussion between pupils about their work) did have an impact. For example, in one lesson younger pupils struggled to hold concentration on their sums when pupils in the next classroom started chanting their times tables. Similarly, on a different occasion, a group of boys found the lesson next door more interesting than the work they were doing and proceeded to misbehave as their attention wandered.

16 The teachers are skilled in using carefully worded questions to probe pupils' understanding and to engage them in conversation about their work. They do this well in all classes. As a result, pupils are used to being asked to explain their thinking and to share their ideas with the rest of their class. Most pupils respond well to this and are proud to show what they can do. For instance, in a lesson where they had been writing poetry, some Year 4 and 5 pupils confidently read out their work. In a Year 6 lesson on the theme of citizenship, pupils overcame their initial embarrassment to say positive things about the person sitting next to them, bringing out personal qualities such as "she is reliable" and "she is a good friend".

17 In the main teachers insist on high standards of behaviour in lessons. However there are a small number of boys in the school who although they sometimes work extremely well and are capable of producing good work, occasionally seem intent on challenging the authority of their teachers and set about disrupting their lessons. The positive strategies used by teachers minimises the impact of this behaviour but there are instances where greater effort is exerted on managing behaviour than on actively supporting and promoting pupils' learning. As a result, during the inspection, teaching and learning were initially good at the start of some of the lessons seen but, as the lessons progressed the impact of the attitudes and behaviour of this small minority of pupils became more apparent and eventually affected the way the teachers could interact and support other pupils.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	10	10	0	0	0

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

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory with good opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall but have some weaknesses that impact on the quality of pupils' learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good enrichment of the curriculum through visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.
- There is insufficient time given to ICT, and there are insufficient computers available, which has a knock-on effect on the standards and the achievement of pupils in this subject.
- The outdoor facilities for reception children are unsatisfactory.
- The outdoor facilities for the rest of the school are spacious and attractive and are used well to promote social activities.

### **Commentary**

18 The curriculum meets statutory requirements and all pupils are fully included. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities, both during and outside the school day. For example, through the use of specialist coaches, the school gives pupils opportunities to try out a particularly wide range of sports, including basketball, volleyball, tennis, golf and judo, which they clearly enjoy and appreciate. Links with other schools support competitive games and further experiences through sport, such as swimming competitions and galas. Extra-curricular clubs add an extra dimension and offer activities as diverse as a dance club, where pupils recently learnt a new routine to the 'crazy frog' ringtone, a recorder club for beginners and a craft club that has proved extremely popular with pupils of all ages.

19 Visits and visitors support the curriculum well. For example, the community nurse has worked on health issues with children and a local artist has helped pupils produce work based on their school and village. Pupils get the chance to go on a wide range of visits, ranging from theatre and museum trips to visits to local farms, woods and environmental field study centres. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to go to France, which adds an international dimension to their experiences, and Year 5 pupils have taken part in European celebrations through the theme of Denmark and Hans Christian Anderson.

20 The ICT curriculum is planned well enough and covers all the required areas and topics but there is simply not enough time allocated for it to be delivered effectively. This is compounded by the fact that there are insufficient computers available which means that pupils often only get the chance to work practically once a fortnight. This is why pupils are not achieving as well as they should be and standards are too low.

21 The school has a lot of outdoor space. There are ample paved areas for pupils to play and the grassed areas are well laid out to provide a mix of quiet areas and open space. These outdoor facilities are used well to support work in many areas of the curriculum, including science and geography, and pupils socialise well during playtimes choosing for themselves whether to play team games on the yards or quieter activities on the grassed areas. The youngest children have access to their own outdoor area but this has only recently been established and is still under-developed. There are no markings on the ground to stimulate and promote children's language development and there is no specific equipment available to support their physical development. The school recognises that the



current outdoor provision for Foundation Stage is insufficient to promote all the areas of learning for children this age, and there are plans to invest in this area in the near future.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils are satisfactory. The support, advice and guidance given to pupils, including child protection, are also satisfactory. The pupils are effectively involved in the life of the school, particularly through the school council.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support.
- The school seeks, values and acts on pupils' views through their contribution to the school council.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always provide clear enough guidance on what they have done well and how they could do better.

## **Commentary**

22 Statutory requirements are met for health and safety, and child protection procedures follow the recommendation of the Area Child Protection Committee. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and this is reflected in the effective day to day care of pupils. Pupils confirm that they are confident that they will be well cared for and know whom to turn to if they are hurt or upset. The school has a growing reputation for accepting and supporting pupils with special educational needs. More recently, the number of pupils with statements of specific need have increased, and they have been integrated well into the daily life of the school. These children receive good levels of care and support from the team of assistants assigned to work with them. As a result, they make a good contribution to pupils' achievement. Throughout the school, teachers know a lot about the difficulties faced by the pupils in their care. They try hard to ensure that pupils who have barriers to learning are given the means to overcome these, and individual programmes of learning are carefully written for all these pupils. Pupils' difficulties are diagnosed early, and those who need help with reading, writing and number are given support in small groups or individually. Appropriate assessment systems are in place to record pupils' small steps in their learning.

23 The school council is made up from class representatives from across the entire age range, including the youngest children in reception. This group of elected pupils is highly thought of by the staff, parents and their classmates. They meet weekly and, under the guidance of a nominated member of staff, rigorously and sensibly debate issues that affect their life in the school. The council members take their roles very seriously because they know that their views will be taken into account and that their actions can therefore make a difference. For instance, they have been grappling with the difficult issue of where to play football at breaktimes and how to provide other less boisterous activities for other pupils, which has led to a change in the way that the school's grounds are used and the purchase of small games equipment. This group of pupils is a powerful voice in the school and they respect this privilege.

24 Pupils' work is marked regularly but the quality of marking varies quite considerably from class to class and from subject to subject. For example, marking in English is quite effective and this, linked to their individual targets that pupils know and understand, means that pupils have a clear grasp of what they have achieved and what needs to be improved. Marking in mathematics and science is inconsistent and some is superficial, containing just a tick, with very little indication of how the pupils can make their work better. Consequently, this element of assessment is not being used effectively enough to prompt greater learning and raise pupils' achievements to the extent that it could be.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The schools' links with parents and the community are good. Links with other schools are also good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents support the school well and think highly of its work.
- The school is the hub of the local community and it makes good use of this resource to support pupils' learning.
- Strong links with the local comprehensive school help pupils make a smooth move to their next stage of education.

## **Commentary**

25 Parents support the school in many ways, ranging from fund raising to helping in classrooms and assisting with school trips and visits. They are kept well informed by a good range of literature and regular newsletters about the life and work of the school, and through daily communications with teachers via pupils' reading and homework diaries. The school actively seeks parents' views and encourages them to take an interest and become involved in their child's learning. As a result, support for homework is strong and parents feel that the school is doing a good job for their children.

26 Castleside is a small compact community and the school is a focal point, with many of the parents having previously attended as pupils themselves. Members of the local community are invited into the school as part of its extended family, and pupils regularly go out and participate in activities such as coffee mornings, church services and local festivals. At a more formal level, the school has forged links with a local community partnership group, to the extent of pupils being involved in the design of the group's logo. The school capitalises on many opportunities that the local community provides to support and extend pupils' learning.

27 The school has effective links with many other local schools but has established a particularly good link with the neighbouring comprehensive school, to which the majority of children transfer at the end of Year 6. These links span curricular areas, for instance where visiting specialist teachers from the secondary school contribute their skills, to joint visits to field study centres supporting geography topics. There is a well-established programme of transition visits between the schools giving Year 5 and 6 pupils the opportunity to get to know some of the secondary teachers and to become familiar and comfortable with their surroundings before formally transferring into Year 7. The partnership between the two schools is developing at strategic level with shared funding available to support the development of ICT facilities aimed at raising standards in this subject.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership is satisfactory and improving rapidly as she settles into her new post. The leadership of key staff is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. The school is managing the aids and barriers to raising pupils' achievement fairly effectively.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- English and mathematics are co-ordinated effectively to promote good achievement and high standards in these subjects.
- Critical self-evaluation is not embedded firmly enough into the school's cycle of monitoring and planning.
- There has been insufficient improvement in ICT since the last inspection and this remains an issue today.
- The new headteacher has got the confidence and support of the staff and governors to move the school forward and inject greater pace into school improvement.

## **Commentary**

28 The school has followed the typical trend and concentrated mainly on literacy and numeracy over the past few years. As a result, these subjects are much more advanced

than others. For instance, teachers' planning is more precise, assessment systems are more rigorous and the marking of pupils' work is more effective. There is also a greater degree of consistency in the teaching across these two subjects because they are being led and managed well. All of these factors contribute to the strengths in English and mathematics which ultimately show in pupils' achievements and standards.

29 The school has come through an unsettling period with instability at the highest level due to the absence of the previous headteacher for a significant period of time. The new headteacher has now got a clearer grasp of the issues that the school needs to tackle and has secured the confidence and trust of the staff and governors. As a result, there is now a much greater sense of urgency in the school's planning and a sharper focus on future development that will have a direct impact on improving pupils' achievements and raising standards further. The school improvement plan provides a broad outline of the key areas to be tackled and funding has recently been allocated to support investment in the areas where it is needed most, including ICT, the replacement and renewal of teaching resources and improvements to the outdoor area for the Foundation Stage. However, the school has not yet established a systematic and robust process of self-evaluation that provides a secure and accurate picture of how it is performing and does not have a culture of asking why. Consequently, some decisions have been made on the basis of professional intuition rather than sharply focused probing and analysis of what is working well and what needs to improve. For example, pupils' performance data is not being used to the extent it could be to identify strengths and weaknesses in practice and to target intervention and resources where they are needed most. Although it is credible and convincing to argue that the size and differing makeup of pupil groups each year will affect the school's performance and its trend when compared to other schools, the school cannot always backup its arguments with secure evidence. This leaves it vulnerable and at a significant disadvantage in the future where effective self-evaluation is becoming the central platform for future external evaluation and inspection.

30 ICT was an issue at the time of the last inspection and remains so today. The school did make some gains in this area but the pace of development has overtaken it and left it behind again. The fundamental issue is a lack of investment that has left the school with insufficient equipment to effectively deliver the ICT curriculum. Although the planning of the curriculum has improved, and the content now covers all the areas that should be taught to pupils of this age, the lack of equipment means that pupils cannot get access to computers often enough to either learn the required skills or to put them into practise.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	359,161	Balance from previous year	8,415
Total expenditure	337,029	Balance carried forward to the next	30,547
Expenditure per pupil	2,832		

31 Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met the school is paying due regard to its race equality policy. The headteacher and governors manage the school's finance soundly. They have prioritised keeping teaching staff and thereby reducing the class sizes but have also recognised that greater flexibility with staffing will be needed in the future to ensure that sufficient funding is available to continue to support teaching and learning effectively. The governors have a

good understanding of the principles of best value and are committed to trying to maintain standards and provide pupils with the best quality of education they can. The school currently provides satisfactory value for money.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

32 The school makes satisfactory provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. However there are now some weaknesses in accommodation and resources that require improvement because they are having an impact on the rate at which some children achieve new skills, particularly in their physical and creative development. Outdoor resources are unsatisfactory. There is no large apparatus for children to climb on, balance or slide and there are very few large wheeled toys. The school has recognised these shortcomings and has plans in place to remedy them. The resources for role-play are also inadequate, with no ethnic or multicultural toys or dressing-up clothes. The teacher and support staff do a good job with the resources they have, but most resources for all areas of learning are now just adequate and are looking tired and well used. The accommodation is small and difficult for staff to organise for the mix of reception and Year 1 children, who do have different learning needs.

33 Children enter the reception class with skills which overall are typical for their age, although there is a very wide variation in the skills and abilities of the individual children. Some have significant special educational needs, but they achieve well against the targets set for them because of the good quality support they receive. In spite of the difficulties created by the accommodation and resources, children achieve well in their communication, language, and literacy and in their mathematical development. They achieve satisfactorily in knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development. Most children are likely to reach the standards typical for their age by the end of the reception year.

34 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and it is good in language and mathematics based activities. The teacher is new to the Foundation Stage and is still developing her own skills, but she has already established an effective team of staff who work well together. Relationships are good and children are relaxed, happy and eager to learn new things. Activities are carefully planned, so that the mix of Year 1 and reception children all experience activities that are well matched to what they know and can do.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good relationships support children's willingness to take part in new activities.
- Children are given many opportunities to work with others and to act responsibly.

#### **Commentary**

35 Teaching is satisfactory and by the end of the reception year, most children are likely to reach the standards that are expected of them. Achievement is satisfactory. Relationships with adults are polite and trusting and children show natural curiosity to visitors in their classroom, although they are not fussy and are not distracted from their activities. Most children behave well and listen carefully to instructions. Children show interest and excitement when learning new skills. They have a good attitude to learning and are able to concentrate for extended periods. The teacher and learning support staff

give children many opportunities to develop independence, work with other children and begin to take responsibility. This is particularly so for those children with special educational needs, who are given sensitive support to begin to be independent.



## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching of the sounds of letters (phonics) is effective and this has a positive effect on learning.
- Lessons are well planned to enable small groups of children to benefit from adult support.
- Resources are lacking in stimulation and many books are very well worn.

### **Commentary**

36 Teaching is good in this area of learning and consequently most children are likely to reach the standards expected of them by the end of the reception year. Higher attaining children are already exceeding the expectations for their age and have activities planned to match what they can do and to provide a further element of challenge. All children achieve well, particularly in their speaking and listening skills and in their ability to use the sounds of letters (phonics) to help them to spell new words. Phonic skills are being taught well and children are encouraged to use these skills to spell rhyming words, such as 'dog' and 'frog', or 'cat' and 'mat'. Children are successful at this and therefore enjoy activities that enable them to practice spelling rhyming words. The teacher makes good use of the learning support staff available to her to plan activities so that children benefit from teaching in small groups of five or six. This focused attention has a positive effect on their learning. For example, in one lesson, one group of children used paints and plastic letters to print simple rhyming words on a card, while another, higher attaining group, worked with a support assistant to write more complex words, such as 'ship', 'fish' and 'shop'. Early reading skills are developed as children learn to identify the difference between the title and text of a poem. They read simple poems, adding their own rhymes to make rhyming couplets. There is a small selection of fiction and non-fiction books, but some of these books are now quite old. The selection of books available fails to excite children and when observed, children do not eagerly choose a book to sit and read or look at.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective planning means that children benefit from teaching in small groups with adult support.
- Good use of correct mathematical vocabulary is having a positive effect on learning.

### **Commentary**

37 Most children are likely to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year and all children are achieving well in their understanding of number and in their acquisition of mathematical language. Higher attaining children are already working at levels above those expected for their age. Teaching is good and activities are well planned to cater for the needs of children with a wide variation in their abilities. The teacher ensures that children have activities matched to what they can do and are taught in small groups

with a high level of adult support. This means that higher attaining children receive activities that challenge them while those children who have special educational needs work in groups of two or three, with good support from teaching assistants, which means that they are able to experience success and achieve well. All staff constantly engage children in lively conversation during activities. They ask searching questions to probe their understanding and to ensure that children use correct mathematical terminology when answering questions. Children of higher and average ability are confident in their understanding of 'add on', 'the number before' and 'more than'. For example, when asked, "What is 2 more than 6?" or "Which number comes before 3?" children can respond with correct answers. Most children are able to count upwards in 2's and can identify where a missing number is in a sequence of numbers up to 20.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Visits and visitors are used well to support children's learning.
- Multicultural resources are unsatisfactory and this makes it more difficult for children to learn about other cultures.

### **Commentary**

38 Teaching is satisfactory and most children are likely to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year. Children achieve satisfactorily and benefit from a range of well planned visits out of school and visits from people in their community, which extend their learning experiences. For example, visits into the local village are used well to teach children early geographical skills. Children completed a traffic survey, using a digital camera to photograph their work, and noted that the roads near to their school were very busy. They collected information about how their classmates travel to school and then made a graph to show that most children travel to school by car. Early skills in science are developed as children explore and investigate using their senses. For instance, they taste new fruit, look at and investigate which building materials have been used in their school and use the simple science skills of collecting, classifying and recording as they observe mini-beasts in the school grounds. In history, children learn about changes over time as they look at photographs of themselves as babies and then toddlers, or look at how household objects have changed since Victorian times. Computer skills develop as children learn to control the mouse to 'Dress the Teddy' and they use a simple 'Paint' program to design greeting cards. Most children are able to write simple text using early word processing skills and add graphics. Children explore their own beliefs and the beliefs and customs of others through stories and role-play activities, but they have inadequate multicultural resources to help them to develop their understanding of other cultures.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Outdoor accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

- Physical activities are used well to develop personal and social skills and to develop responsible attitudes.

### **Commentary**

39 Teaching is satisfactory and all staff work hard to make up for the lack of suitable outdoor resources. As a result, most children are likely to reach the standards expected of them by the end of the reception class. Their achievement is satisfactory overall, because this group of children had physical skills that were below typical for their age when they entered the reception class, but their achievement could have been better had they had access to a good range of outdoor equipment. Those children with special educational needs achieve well because they have activities well planned for their abilities and where possible, they are given extra tasks and responsibilities to extend their independence. All staff use lessons well to develop children's social skills as they plan activities for children to engage in games that involves working with others in small groups. Children practise a range of athletic activities together and those who are more skilful are able to skip with a rope and demonstrate this well to others.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources for children to explore colour, shape and texture are lacking in stimulation and are barely adequate. Resources for imaginative role-play are unsatisfactory.
- Children have daily access to a creative activity, which is planned well to support learning in language and mathematics based activities.

### **Commentary**

40 Teaching is satisfactory and as in physical development, all staff work hard to compensate for the lack of stimulating learning resources. As a consequence, most children are likely to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year. They achieve satisfactory skills, but their achievement could be better, particularly in their imaginative play, if they had access to better resources. Children have good printing skills and often use plastic or rubber letters to help them practise spelling new words or to explore number and pattern to support their mathematical development. Activities are planned so that most groups of children have the opportunity each day to work on some creative activity.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has dealt with the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. As a result, standards are higher than they were then.
- Teaching is generally good and pupils achieve well. However, in some lessons, teachers miss chances to stretch pupils.
- The school has good strategies for managing poor behaviour, but, in two classes, learning is affected by the behaviour of a small minority.
- There is insufficient use of computers to draft, improve or present pupils' writing.

#### **Commentary**

41 In Year 6, standards in English are above average. This is better than it was at the last inspection and confirms the improvement seen in the national tests last year. In these, the school achieved its best ever results. Significant differences in the size and make up of cohorts means that test results do not tell the whole story, but the school is well placed to maintain good standards in this subject. One reason for the improvement is the effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils can now use a wider and more demanding range of reading and writing skills. They enjoy lessons, know they are doing well and the great majority are keen to learn. Teaching is good, and especially so in Year 6 where pupils' progress accelerates. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and also make good progress in English. Girls have usually done better than boys in tests, but there are no differences in the way they are taught. Overall, pupils are achieving well in reading, writing, speaking and listening by Year 6.

42 Pupils in Year 2 are reaching the expected standards in reading, speaking and listening. Nearly all read with enjoyment and understanding and are reasonably accurate. They have good strategies for tackling unfamiliar words because they have a thorough grounding in phonics from previous classes. Good support from home is also making a difference. Teachers encourage pupils to speak clearly and give full answers. They give them time to explain their ideas and insist on good listening habits. However there are some weaknesses in writing. A small number write fluently, choosing imaginative words and phrases, but standards overall are below those usually seen for this age group. Over one third find it hard to go beyond a few sentences without help and they use a limited vocabulary. Spelling, punctuation and handwriting are erratic. One reason is that there are some pupils in this class with identified behaviour difficulties. Some of these find it hard to settle down and write at length. Teachers manage behaviour well, especially when extra adult help is available. However there are times when this group affects the concentration and achievement of the other pupils. Nevertheless, examples of current work in pupils' books show that they are catching up in writing and generally making satisfactory progress.

43 There are strengths in the teaching in all classes, but teachers could sometimes be clearer about what pupils are to learn. Lessons are planned carefully, with clear explanations and relevant examples. Teachers provide a range of interesting activities

using well-chosen materials. They work hard to involve everyone, putting a good emphasis on enjoyment and raising pupils' confidence. As a result, pupils work steadily and make at least satisfactory progress. However, even in the best lessons, achievement could be higher if teachers focussed more sharply on what they want pupils to know and remember. For example, some parts of lessons come to an end without much chance for pupils to think about or celebrate what they have done. When teachers give time for this, it not only makes a more satisfying piece of learning for the pupils, but teachers are able to check what pupils have grasped and so plan the next steps at the right level.

44 Teachers could demand more from their pupils. They do not always fire pupils to go the extra mile in literacy lessons, for example by going beyond the minimum work required, or making their handwriting and presentation reach new heights. In some cases, pupils of very different abilities do the same work as everyone else. As a result, teachers miss chances to drive up standards more quickly. In contrast, some good marking in the pupils' *extended writing* books is bearing fruit. In these, teachers give praise where due, but they also give clear pointers about ways to improve. Pupils like this and try to follow the advice. Some of this finds its way into their individual targets. Consequently some of the best progress is seen in these books.

45 The subject leader has done well in raising standards, revising the curriculum and responding to the weaknesses in higher reading skills that were identified in the last inspection. She has also begun to lead staff in a useful review of systems to record pupils' progress. Some of the present procedures are time consuming and do not have much impact on teachers' planning. Other areas rightly identified for development are the use of ICT to improve writing and a more rigorous system for monitoring the effectiveness of lessons on the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils do not make as much use of ICT as they could to draft and redraft their writing or to present different forms of information for different audiences. The monitoring issue will be particularly important to help the school to build on what has been achieved already.

## **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

46 Speaking and listening skills are promoted well in other lessons, including personal, social and health education. The school provides many chances for pupils to perform to an audience, as well as meeting visitors. Pupils in Year 3, for example, prepared interviews for a local history expert who visited. History also provides many opportunities for writing, for instance, pupils in Year 6 wrote letters from the Titanic that were full of period detail. In Year 2, some usually reluctant writers were inspired by the Great Fire of London, to produce phrases such as "it looked as though the flames reached up to heaven". Teachers also make good use of science and design and technology to help develop pupils' technical vocabulary and practise report writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well in Year 6 because the quality of teaching is very good.
- Older pupils have good problem solving skills and they use and interpret lists, charts and graphs very well.
- ICT is rarely used to support learning in mathematics.

- The subject is well led and managed, but the results of tests and trends is not yet analysed or used with enough rigour.

## **Commentary**

47 Standards in the current Year 6 are high when compared with what most schools attain and when compared with similar schools. Pupils have achieved very well and this is despite almost a third of pupils in the class having special educational or physical needs and despite the fact that almost twenty five percent of the pupils joined the class from other schools. This is a result of very good teaching and very effective support from classroom assistants. Standards in the upper juniors are now better than there were at the time of the previous inspection and the older boys now achieve better than they did.

48 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Key Stage 2. The current Year 2 class reaches standards that broadly match what is expected for their age and their achievement has been satisfactory since starting school. All teachers have good subject knowledge and use a good range of strategies to teach key mathematical skills. This has been particularly effective in the teaching of those skills that enable pupils to quickly see patterns and sequences in number. As a consequence, pupils successfully use a wide range of methods to solve problems and are confident and eager when learning new skills.

49 The skills of how to solve problems involving data and how to use and interpret lists, charts, graphs and diagrams have been taught well. As a result, pupils use these skills very effectively to support their learning in other subjects, such as science and geography. These aspects were seen as strengths during the last inspection and the school has done well to maintain these key skills. It was also noted at the previous inspection that older pupils used their mathematical vocabulary particularly well. This is still a good feature in lessons, and now younger pupils also use correct mathematical vocabulary. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were confident in their use and understanding of the terms 'exact proportion' in relation to their work on simple fractions. On the whole, the marking of pupils' work is satisfactory and there are many good examples of pupils being given clear learning targets so that they know what to do to improve. However, it is inconsistent and some marking is superficial, containing just a tick, with very little indication of how the pupils can make their work better.

50 The use of resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory, but many resources are old and some are barely satisfactory. However, teachers make effective use of what is available to them. Learning resources to support mathematics were found to be good at the previous inspection, but the school has not maintained this good feature. Resources for ICT are not sufficient and this means that pupils are unable to use computers to support their learning often enough. For instance, although pupils have very good skills in their ability to compile charts and graphs, they rarely get the opportunity to use computer-based data handling programs to further extend their skills and competence.

51 Mathematics is led and managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has good subject knowledge and keeps up to date with new initiatives that may help her colleagues. Teaching is monitored appropriately, teachers' plans are checked and pupils' work is scrutinised on a regular basis. What could be improved is the way data from assessments and regular tests are used. Currently, information is gathered and some good work is done to check pupils' responses in tests to monitor whether there are patterns emerging in the way pupils answer some questions. If this requires a change in teaching

plans, then this is done quickly. However, the sharply focused analysis of trends over time, which then feeds into whole school strategic planning, is not yet rigorous enough.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52 There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to use and extend their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in science, pupils present the findings of their experiments using graphs, charts and tables. In geography, world temperatures have been carefully recorded using graphs, which enable pupils to make easy visual comparisons. Mathematical displays in each classroom are used effectively to enable pupils to develop their skills in how to use and apply their mathematical knowledge.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils get a good range of practical experiences and develop secure investigative skills.
- Marking of pupils' work is weak and unhelpful.
- Pupils make very good use of their numeracy and information handling skills to collect, organise and present the results from their experiments.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to support learning in science.



## Commentary

53 Standards in science are satisfactory. Last years results for the Year 6 pupils did not look as good in science as they did in English and mathematics, when compared to other schools, but pupils' achievement was satisfactory and they reached the levels expected for their age.

54 The science curriculum is well planned to give pupils a wide range of practical investigative experiences. As a result, younger pupils begin to learn how to make reasonable predictions and how to record their results. For example, when testing to see how the slope of a ramp affected the distance a car would travel and when looking at what happens when different materials are heated and then allowed to cool back down. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils are confidently tackling investigations to answer questions such as "How does the length of a wire in a circuit affect the brightness of a bulb?" and, "How does the size of the particles affect how quickly a solid dissolves?" They carefully record their predictions and outline how their tests will be kept fair by identifying what they will keep the same in each experiment and what parameters they will change. Pupils use diagrams well to illustrate and explain how their investigations will be carried out and record their results diligently.

55 Teaching is satisfactory. Consequently, pupils learn at a steady rate and develop their scientific knowledge, skills and understanding securely as they progress through the school. Nevertheless, the marking of pupils' work is a weakness. Marking rarely gives any written feedback to pupils on what they have done well or on where and how they could improve their work. Discussions with older pupils confirmed that they knew what they have covered in science but they did not know how they could make their work better or what to aim at next. Consequently, this element of assessment is not being used effectively enough to prompt greater learning and raise pupils' achievements to the extent that it could be.

56 Pupils make very good use of their numeracy and information handling skills to support their work in science. For instance, they carefully record results in tables then present their findings using various methods, including line graphs, charts and Venn diagrams. Pupils' work also demonstrates that they can interpret graphs well and use this information to help predict what they think will happen next. For example, analysing the effect of temperature changes over time when trying to answer, "How does the temperature of water affect the rate of dissolving?"

57 Insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in science. This is not a reflection on teachers' knowledge or awareness of how ICT can be used but is a symptom of the lack of resources and limited availability to the computers that the school already has. Pupils do have some worthwhile experiences, such as using the Internet for research and using a digital camera to record the outcomes of some of their scientific experiments, but there are many other opportunities that are missed where ICT could add an extra dimension and stimulus to pupils' learning.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not achieve well enough and standards are below where they should be.

- The school has made some progress since the last inspection but there is still a shortage of sufficient resources.
- ICT is not used well enough to support learning in other subjects.

## **Commentary**

58 Pupils get a broad range of experiences in ICT and this is a definite improvement since the last inspection where the curriculum was identified as being patchy and incomplete. Despite this improvement, pupils are not getting enough time in ICT to develop their knowledge and skills in sufficient detail. This is why standards are too low and achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils have a superficial and broad-brush understanding of all the required areas but lack any real depth in their knowledge. They are therefore capable of carrying out the activities that they are given but few have the knowledge and confidence to then take these skills and use or apply them in another activity.

59 The school made some investment in ICT following the last inspection, which was appropriate at the time. However, things have moved on since then and the range and quantity of equipment available is now too little to be able to deliver the curriculum effectively. This has been recognised and funds have been allocated from the school's budget to improve and broaden the range of resources for this subject. This is a positive move that should impact quickly on the quality of provision in ICT. The curriculum and the teaching are secure – it is simply that there is insufficient equipment and therefore too little time and opportunity for pupils to have the practical experiences they need to do better in this subject.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

60 ICT is not used well enough to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Where experiences do happen, pupils grasp them and do their best. For example, using a simple graphics package to produce art work in different styles, using word processors to present reports, and using the Internet for research. However, the lack of resources severely limits pupils' opportunities to get access to ICT and this hampers their development.

## **HUMANITIES**

61 Work was sampled from **geography** and **history** and only one lesson was seen in geography. As a result there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on teaching or standards. Teachers' records show that both subjects are given appropriate curriculum time. Visits and visitors support these subjects well. For example, in history, pupils in Year 6 develop a range of historical skills through a popular visit to Beamish Museum. In Year 3 pupils were able to interview an expert on local history, and this brought both history and geography to life for them. In Years 4 and 5, pupils learnt from a visit to a local river valley, although, in contrast, some other geography work in this class was largely copied and less relevant to the pupils' experience. Teachers often provide their own resources and materials to support learning, such as a video programme which made a great impression on pupils in Year 2. Pupils are beginning to use ICT to support their work, for instance when pupils in Year 3 made good use of websites to compare climate zones and improve their atlas skills. By Year 6, most pupils can search the Internet independently, but some need more guidance on how to select and present what they find out. Greater use could be made of ICT to support pupils' learning and add a stimulating dimension to humanities.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of major world religions.
- Visits and visitors are used well to provide pupils with first-hand learning experiences.
- There are missed opportunities in some lessons to explore spiritual aspects of faith.

### Commentary

62 Standards in religious education remain in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. All pupils achieve satisfactorily and those pupils with special educational needs are well supported enabling them to achieve as well as their classmates. The school makes good use of displays of posters, books and artefacts in each classroom, which encourage the pupils to use their research skills to find out how people of other faiths worship.

63 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers make good use of visits to places of worship and, where they can, invite visitors into school to extend pupils' experiences. Visitors make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of different forms of worship and important aspects of living within a faith community. For example, in Year 3, a visit from a Sikh parent enabled pupils to develop a much greater understanding of how Sikhs worship and live their day to day lives. Similarly, in a good lesson with a class of Year 4 and 5 pupils, a visit from a missionary who had visited Lourdes, gave pupils the opportunity to explore aspects of Christian faith involving pilgrimages to holy places and to discuss the concept of miracles.

64 There are some missed opportunities, both in lessons and during assemblies and acts of collective worship, to give pupils the chance to explore spiritual moments that can develop through listening to music or during times of stillness and reflection. Where opportunities are explored however, pupils respond very well. For example a scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 6 showed that pupils had listened to a wide range of music from composers such as Bach and Vivaldi and had listened to Gregorian chants, which encouraged them to think about feelings of love, peace, wonder and awe. Literacy skills are used appropriately to support learning, but ICT is rarely used, mainly due to the lack of suitable resources. The headteacher is providing satisfactory leadership and management of the subject whilst the roles of subject leaders are currently under review.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

65 There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on provision in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education and so these subjects have been sampled.

66 In **art and design**, teachers ensure that pupils experience a wide variety of techniques and materials. During Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils handle a range of tools and media in their sketches, painting, printing and collage work. Teachers encourage pupils to explore new ideas, for example in using natural materials after a Year 4/5 visit to a river valley. The use of sketchbooks is a good feature throughout the school – these are used seriously to collect ideas, try effects and make notes of details. Some classes are beginning to explore the use of computers in art and design, such as pupils in Year 2 who

spent a long time refining their impressive pictures in the style of Mondrian. A discussion with pupils in Year 6 indicated that they have a reasonable knowledge of a few famous artists and their work but that they have limited awareness of art from a range of cultures. Art and design is regularly used to enrich learning in other subjects and pupils clearly enjoy this aspect of their work.

67 In **design and technology**, planning is thorough and appropriate time is allocated to the subject. Curriculum time is sometimes blocked to allow pupils to focus on their products and get things finished. This also allows specialist visitors to spend productive time in school, which works well. For example, when a team of engineers worked in Year 6 on bridge building, pupils enjoyed this and produced some impressive structures. Teachers make sure that pupils develop skills in all aspects of the subject, namely designing, making and evaluating. In Year 2, for example, pupils made some good sketches and notes when they built playground equipment such as swings or a well. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 continue to look at the whole process, with some good designs and testing for their chairs and money containers. A feature of this work is the useful link made with literacy lessons to improve report writing. Mathematical skills are also practised, for example, when pupils in Year 3 analysed data in their customer research on sandwich preferences.

68 No **music** lessons were seen, so no judgement could be made on the quality of teaching or standards. A singing session in the Hall was observed with pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 and a lunchtime extra-curricular recorder activity was also seen. The singing lesson in the Hall was a practice session for when the pupils attend the 'Sage' at Gateshead to take part in a celebration of music related to the sea. Pupils sang songs with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Older pupils sang tunefully and confidently in duets and quartets. All pupils joined in singing sea shanties, adding harmony and showing good awareness of beat and rhythm. When extra-curricular activities take place, this provides a worthwhile opportunity for pupils to practise their skills both in playing the recorder and in following musical notation.

69 Few **physical education** lessons were seen so there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the school's provision. The curriculum is extended by a good range of specialist coaches who visit the school and offer sports as diverse as judo and golf to the pupils. Photographs of these events show that pupils clearly enjoy these opportunities. Extra-curricular sporting activities also provide additional experiences for pupils, such as a dance club, netball, football and cross-country, including competitive opportunities through leagues with other local schools. Records for pupils in Years 4 and 5 show that the majority can swim 25 metres and many can do more than this in a variety of strokes, which is the level required by the time they leave the school. The school's extensive grounds provide a good range of outdoor facilities to support physical education.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

70 Too few lessons in **PSHE** and **citizenship** were seen to make a judgement about provision and so the subject has been sampled. Discussions with staff indicate that the school has a clear focus on the development of PSHE and citizenship, and that this is considered to be an important aspect in the rounded development of its pupils. From their first experiences in reception, children are encouraged to be part of the school community and to take pride in their achievements. They are supported by a clear set of rules and expectations that set a standard they know is expected of them, and they are supported well in this by the positive examples set by the Year 6 pupils who take pride in their position in the school and look after their younger 'buddies'. As they get older, pupils are taught about sex and relationships education and drugs education, and they begin to consider

broader issues, such as feelings, relationships, rights and responsibilities. Health and healthy lifestyles are important features of the school's PSHE programme and are promoted effectively through colourful poster displays, sports activities and a daily reminder to eat fruit and other foods that are good for you.

71 The school council is a shining example of how pupils develop their responsibility as citizens. All classes are represented on the council and pupils see and respect this as their way of being heard. The council members are highly regarded and take great pride in their contribution to the life and work of the school. They are good ambassadors for the school, for instance when talking to visitors, and this illustrates the pride that pupils feel for their school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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