

INSPECTION REPORT

COTHERSTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cotherstone, Barnard Castle

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114020

Headteacher: Mrs Patricia Barker

Lead inspector: Mike Onyon

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 September 2004

Inspection number: 266673

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:	84
School address:	Cotherstone Barnard Castle
Postcode:	DL12 9QB
Telephone number:	01833 650491
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Teresa Wilcox

Date of previous inspection: 4-6 May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cotherstone is a smaller than average sized primary school in a rural location. At the time of this inspection, 83 children were attending. As the result of the rural location the number on roll fluctuates from year to year and many pupils travel from some distance. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average at 17 per cent but the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Pupil mobility is average. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language. The school's socio-economic context is favourable. Attainment on entry to the school is average but varies from year to year. The school received a DfES School Achievement Award in 2003. It is in receipt of the national Healthy Schools Award and regularly works with English Nature on a number of environmental projects. Currently the school is working towards national 'Sportsmark' and 'Artsmark' awards. It has a significant partnership with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18146	Michael Onyon	Lead inspector	Special educational needs, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, physical education, religious education.
19446	Susan Wood	Lay inspector	
32133	Joan Elton	Team inspector	Foundation stage, English, citizenship, geography, history, music.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a very effective school providing good value for money. Pupils achieve very well and standards, by Year 6, are consistently well above average in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher and governors provide very good leadership and management.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively. She motivates colleagues in the pursuit of all that is best for the pupils. The second in charge offers very good mentoring to new colleagues. There is a strong sense of teamwork in the school.
- Very good teaching is leading to very good achievement. Standards, by Year 6, are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school.
- Pupils have very good attitudes, behave very well and are mature and responsible for their age. This is because they form very positive relationships with adults and other pupils, there is a very good atmosphere for learning and they feel cared for.
- Very effective links with the community and with other schools support pupils' learning well, offering good opportunities to enrich the curriculum.
- Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have recently been improved; however they now need to be fully utilized to raise standards in the subject.
- The school's systems for assessing pupils' progress are used well to inform future learning but more could be done to help pupils understand how they can improve.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 has been good overall. The school has supported teachers new to the profession well and it remains a very good school. Very high results have been maintained and standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Very good quality teaching and learning have been sustained. In relation to the key issues for action in the previous report, there have been good improvements in planning for assessment, improving the quality of written reports and developments in the quality and provision for the physical development of pupils in the foundation stage.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A*	A*	A*	A
Mathematics	A*	A	A*	A*
Science	A	A*	A*	A

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
A* means that the school's results were in the top five per cent. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is **very good** overall. When children begin school their attainment is generally average, with weaknesses in writing and personal and social skills. Children in the reception class achieve well. They have a good start to their education and, by the time they move on to Year 1, most of them have reached the standard expected nationally in all of the six areas of

learning in the foundation stage curriculum. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. The work they do builds well on what they have done previously. Standards at the end of Year 2 are currently above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in ICT are average. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well. Results at the end of Year 6, in 2003, were very high in English, mathematics and science. Standards in ICT are average. From 1999 to 2003, the school's results in national tests improved above the national trend. Overall results have been very high in English, mathematics and science over the last five years and the test results for 2004 suggest that well above average standards will have been reached.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are **very good**. The pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, cultural development is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well during lessons and at other times. Pupils act in a mature and responsible manner for their age. Pupils from the reception year to Year 6 make a significant contribution to the school council. All pupils have very good opportunities to express their feelings and opinions through their class councils and in high quality lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Attendance is above average and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** overall, with good teaching and learning in reception and in Years 1 and 2, where both teachers have recently completed their first year of teaching. Because of very good mentoring and the efforts of the teachers the teaching and learning are good. In Years 3 to 6 teaching and learning are very good. Expectations are high and teachers know the subjects very well. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff are very successful in promoting a thirst for learning in pupils and in achieving high standards of behaviour and productivity. The school prepares pupils well for national tests but also provides good wider learning opportunities for all the pupils both during and beyond the school day. ICT resources have recently been improved, with the completion of an extension to the school building, and are now good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good; these pupils are well supported and as a result they make good progress in their learning and personal development. Assessment is used well to plan pupils' future learning, but more can be done to help pupils understand how they can improve. The care provided for pupils is very good. Partnership with parents is good and links with other schools and colleges and the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher is a very effective leader. She has been very successful in maintaining high academic standards since the previous inspection and promoting the pupils' personal development. Other key staff, including the second in charge, provide effective leadership and management in their respective areas of responsibility. Very good mentoring support has been provided for teachers new to the profession. Staff work well together as a team. The school governors are very supportive of the school and they make a very effective contribution to its success and efficiency. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the quality of education, the standards achieved by pupils and standards of care provided by the school. A small number felt that leadership and management

could be better and had concerns about approaching the school with questions or problems. Inspection evidence does not support these views. Pupils have a positive view of the school; nearly all say that they really like being there and most of them think that other pupils are friendly and behave well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in ICT.
- Effectively involve pupils in the outcomes of assessment to help them to understand how to improve their work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good overall. All children in the foundation stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well and standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception year have a good start to their education.
- Pupils at the end of Year 6 are prepared well to move on to the next stage of their education.
- In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6. Standards, by Year 6, are high.
- The pupils' successes arise from good and very good teaching and learning and very good leadership. Their success is consistently celebrated in lessons, assemblies and displays.
- Although standards in ICT are average, pupils' achievement in the subject is less than for the core subjects.

Commentary

1. Children in the reception class achieve well. Attainment on entry for most of the children is average and some have had no formal pre-school experience. Parents feel that arrangements for their children to settle into school are good. Because of the good teaching and learning and good balance between direct teaching and child initiated activities, most of the children achieve the expected standards in all of the six areas of learning by the end of the foundation stage, with some reaching higher standards.

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Because small numbers of pupils are admitted to the school each year, careful efforts are made to accommodate individual pupils' needs as they move from one age group to the next. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, and average in ICT. Over the last four years, with the exception of 2002, the school has consistently achieved results in the national tests that are above average. Consistently high standards have been sustained in reading. Whilst the results of the 2004 tests have yet to be validated they suggest that these high standards have been maintained.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.0 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	17.7 (14.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.5 (16.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well. Progress accelerates in Years 3 and 4 in particular. This is because of the high quality teaching best characterised by very high expectations of work and behaviour and very effective use of assessment information to match tasks to individual needs. By the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. They have been well above average for five years and over that period recorded results have sometimes been in the top five percent in the country. The trend in the school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 is above the national trend. High standards have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection and improvement has been good.
- Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are average in ICT. Recent additions to the building have consumed a considerable amount of the school's budget and it has only recently been able to provide adequate computer hardware. As a result of past limited access to computers, standards remain average, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The school is addressing the need to improve standards in ICT and is soon to enjoy the provision of interactive whiteboards in two classrooms, supported by staff training and a focus upon improved pupil attainment.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.5 (31.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	32.0 (31.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.5 (30.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The school development plan indicates clear priorities to further raise standards in writing. The standards achieved in reading, writing, and numeracy, coupled with the key skills of observation, investigation and research, all improve pupils' learning in other subjects. The school has done better than other schools where pupils achieved similar results at the end of Year 2, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' achievements are celebrated well in lessons, for example through daily effort awards, assemblies celebrating a range of achievements and good quality displays of pupils' work. The school's ethos is built around

high expectations. There is no indication of less than satisfactory progress in any area of the curriculum.

6. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs, who achieve well because their work is tailored to their individual needs and builds steadily on previous learning. Needs are identified early and teachers and learning support assistants know and plan for them very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into classroom activities and other pupils are very sensitive to their needs, helping them to achieve very well. In addition useful sessions are arranged, weekly, for pupils to work with a learning support teacher.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their work. Their behaviour is very good. The pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very well provided for. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils love coming to school and arrive in good time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and they are very interested in school life.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are very willing to take responsibility.
- Attendance levels are very high.

Commentary

7. Pupils are enthusiastic to attend school and they enjoy their lessons. They say that their teachers make lessons interesting, expect them to work hard and that they discover new and interesting information. Pupils concentrate well during lesson introductions and are eager and confident to contribute to discussions. When working independently, in pairs or groups, they become engrossed in their working on challenging tasks. The adults in the school act as very good role models and there are very good relationships throughout the school. Staff provide very good role models and children in the foundation stage are on course to reach the early learning goals in personal and social education. Children and pupils throughout the school show respect for the values and feelings of others. They are polite to visitors and are happy to show their work and talk about their experiences in school. Pupils behave very well throughout the school day and this contributes to the creation of a calm and productive work environment. There have been no exclusions over the last twelve months. Rare occurrences of bullying are dealt with well following the guidance of the school's behaviour policy.
8. The school provides for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development very well. Many opportunities are built into the curriculum to raise pupils' spiritual awareness. Assemblies are well structured, as seen when class three presented an assembly based on the musical journey of water, represented through instrumental sounds and songs. Pupils clearly know what is right and wrong, the school rules and expectations, and that bullying or other inappropriate harassment will not be tolerated by the school. The school often supports charities to raise pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are given responsibilities through class and school monitoring roles. The class and school councils also develop their knowledge of the needs of others. Pupils have recently raised money for additional books for the library after organising a successful sponsored event. The cultural development of the pupils is particularly good in their knowledge of their local heritage. Work with local artists has resulted in a drama script and DVD about local castles and legends. Pupils' knowledge of named artists, authors and composers is limited. The school works hard to offer opportunities

for pupils to develop an understanding of the diversity of the multicultural world in which they live.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

9. The attendance figures for the school are very high in comparison to national figures. Approximately half of the pupils arrive at school by bus or taxi and the reliable services provided have a positive affect on attendance and punctuality. The parents of other children ensure they are at school in good time and pupils are keen to attend even if they feel unwell as they enjoy the interesting activities and opportunities provided at school.
10. The school has maintained the very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils since the previous inspection. There has been improvement in the spiritual awareness. Attendance levels have remained very high.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The curriculum is good and there are good opportunities for enrichment. The care provided for pupils is very good. Partnership with parents is good and links with other schools, colleges and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. It is good in reception and Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Assessment is well used to inform teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach.
- Because teachers and support staff plan lessons very well, pupils are very effectively encouraged and engaged. Pupils apply themselves very well and produce a considerable amount of work in lessons.
- There are very good relationships between adults and pupils, with an insistence on very high standards of behaviour.
- Teachers who have recently completed their first year in teaching have been very well supported by the second in charge. Because of this and their efforts their teaching is good.
- Assessment is used well to plan lessons but more can be done to engage pupils in understanding how they can improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	16	1	0	0	0

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

11. Teaching and learning are consistently at least good throughout the school with some very good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Teaching and learning are good in the foundation stage. Activities are well planned and organised in all of the six areas of learning. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2. The teachers of the reception class and the class made up of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are recent entrants to the profession. They have been very well supported by the second in charge and have used opportunities well to develop their teaching and the learning of children and pupils. In particular they have had good opportunities to directly observe very good teaching and learning in the school.
12. The planning of lessons is a particular strength and teachers strive to interest pupils at the beginning of lessons and sustain their concentration throughout, employing a variety of strategies and effectively using interesting resources. They know their subjects very well and share lesson aims with their pupils. In very good lessons where time is well managed, pupils work independently and do their own research after clear teacher explanation and appropriate pupil interaction. On occasion, when the explanation or oral input is over-long, pupils are unable to finish a task even though they are interested and keen to do so. Teachers are particularly good at using questions that are appropriate for individual pupils, based on good knowledge of their level of learning. Teachers make good use of assessment in their daily planning and frequently explain to the class that the aims of the current lesson reflect the good progress made in previous lessons. This shows that the school has improved its procedures by identifying assessment opportunities in its short term planning, an issue identified at the time of the previous inspection.
13. Parents and pupils quite rightly acknowledge the good quality of teaching and learning in the school, through their response to questionnaires. Teachers have established very good relationships with their pupils and frequently praise and encourage them. As a result there are high standards of behaviour. Most lessons have shared good humour and teachers use games effectively to generate excitement when teaching a particular concept. When teachers talk to the class at the beginning of lessons they are very skilful in maximizing pupil participation. Pupils speak confidently to the rest of the class, who listen well. This leads to a growth in self-esteem and their increased confidence is carried over into frequently high quality written work.
14. Teachers make good provision for all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or special educational needs both in classroom activities and in homework tasks. In the latter teachers often set independent research projects. In class resources are modified to meet specific needs. Individual educational plans, for pupils with special educational needs, are clear and detailed enough to be incorporated into general lesson plans. As a result, teaching assistants can help these pupils work through tasks set successfully and hence they fully benefit from the lesson. Marking is used well to assist individual progress by recognising achievements, and indicates how progress can be made. Progress made in developing the school's systems for the assessment of pupils' progress has been good. Targets for future improvements in English, mathematics and science are set for the pupils. They now need to be more involved and actively engaged in the process,

talking about what the targets mean and what they need to do to improve. This will help them to understand fully what it is they need to do and how they can do it.

15. In Years 3 and 4, in particular, all of the positive characteristics of the teaching and learning are at their best. The teacher has very high expectations of work and behaviour. Tasks are challenging and stimulating and matched very well to the different needs of different groups of pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good overall. There are good enrichment opportunities, especially in the arts. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in English, mathematics and science is very well developed. A cross-curricular approach effectively links other subjects of the curriculum to these subjects.
- A very good programme of personal development contributes to pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Curriculum enrichment, for a range of activities, is good.
- The range of large play equipment for children in the foundation stage needs to be extended in order to increase the learning opportunities available to them.

Commentary

16. The curriculum in the foundation stage is good and enables children to achieve well in all areas of learning. The curriculum as a whole develops pupils' skills and knowledge progressively as they move through the school so that by the time pupils leave they have achieved very well and have reached well above average standards. Its main strength lies in the very good match of tasks to needs and their relevance to all groups of pupils. The approaches recommended by the national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented very effectively and have led to high standards. In English, for example, pupils achieve very well, especially in reading. The current focus on writing is bearing fruit in the growing competence of pupils in writing for a variety of purposes. A strong focus on investigational activities effectively underpins good mathematical achievement. Problem solving and opportunities are at the centre of work in both mathematics and science so pupils use and apply their learning very effectively, as in a number of science experiments observed in Years 5 and 6 during the inspection, where pupils examined the weight of air.
17. Subjects of the national curriculum are linked effectively, through the careful planning of lessons. Because of the small numbers of pupils admitted each year, they are often taught in classes where there are different age groups. Flexibility is maintained to enable all pupils to experience all areas of the curriculum at their appropriate level. Activities are often built around a central topic, but including relevant elements of different subjects. For example, in the class made up of pupils in Years 3 and 4, mathematics and science were being studied through a practical approach, looking at journeys to school and methods of transport. One group studied the relative merits of the teacher travelling to school on different makes of motorbike.

18. There is very good planning for pupils' personal development. A programme of discrete lessons includes opportunities for pupils to discuss matters of importance to themselves, classmates and the school in general. School and class councils enable pupils to have a say in how their school is run. For example, a recent sponsored run organized by the school council has provided additional play equipment for use at playtimes. There are regular residential experiences which give pupils the opportunity to relate to each other and to adults in a less formal context and develop their social skills and independence. Much is accomplished relatively informally throughout all subjects. As the result of adults' very good examples and high expectations of behaviour, pupils learn to think in a mature way and to act responsibly whether as individuals or in group activities.
19. Social and educational inclusion is fostered well. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs are identified as soon as possible so that lessons and activities can be suitably modified for them. Some withdrawal sessions provide extra support for pupils where assessment indicates they need it. The good numbers of teaching assistants working in close liaison with the teachers use their experience and skills very well to meet the varying needs of individuals. Rightly, parents and pupils feel strongly that children are treated fairly. The school's ethos places children at the heart of all considerations. Their views are sought regularly. Extra-curricular activities, which include entries to local and national competitions, help talented pupils to achieve well in those areas. A group of adults from the school go running through the village, after school, to encourage pupils to participate in physical exercise.
20. Good enrichment activities are provided. For example, a variety of local artists have worked with pupils covering a range of projects to enhance skills in the arts, a songwriter worked with pupils throughout the school, culminating in the creation of the 'Cotherstone Cheese Song' and a local actor enabled staff and children to produce a dramatic production based on their village.
21. Strengths of staffing include a good match of both teaching and non-teaching staff to pupils' needs. The accommodation, overall, is satisfactory. It has improved, since the previous inspection, to include an additional classroom. This has enabled the school hall to be used effectively for gatherings of the whole school. However, the small hall still places limitations on its use for indoor physical education. The school successfully overcomes the limitation by ensuring that all pupils in Years 3 to 6 have weekly opportunities for indoor physical education and swimming at Teesdale Sports Centre. The school has plans to improve further its outdoor facilities, particularly for younger children, through the provision of additional large scale toys. The only indoor access to the Year 3 and 4 classroom is currently through the classroom occupied by Year 2 pupils. Pupils cope well with occasional interruptions and school routines encourage adults and pupils to use an outdoor route whenever possible. Overall improvement has been good. Resources, overall, are good. The number of computers has recently been improved and access to them is now available to all children and pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Care for pupils' welfare, health and safety is very good. Pupils are given good support, advice and guidance as a result of monitoring their achievements. There are very good systems in place to gather the views and ideas of the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are well provided for and they are supported well as they join the school.
- Pupils feel confident to approach an adult in the school if they have worries or concerns.
- Pupils' views and ideas are valued and acted on.

Commentary

22. Procedures in place for health, safety and child protection are very good. The school provides a very caring and supportive environment in which pupils can learn, develop and mature. The school is currently working towards the Healthy School award. The young children are carefully introduced to school. Systems are in place and followed to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils from other schools mid year; they are often supported by a 'buddy' to help them settle quickly to the new routines. The friendship bench and pals have been introduced to support pupils with worries, encouraging pupils to help and care for each other. The school is sensitive to the individual needs of all its pupils and works hard to ensure that they are met.
23. Pupils feel confident that adults will listen to their worries and concerns and action will be taken to help them and this is supported by the very good relationships seen in the school. Many parents feel the school has a family atmosphere, which enables pupils to feel comfortable discussing any sensitive issues which they may have. Pupils also state that both sides of a disagreement are listened to and then dealt with firmly but fairly and that bullying or other harassment rarely reoccurs.
24. The school gathers the views of pupils well through questionnaires, the class and school councils. Pupils write down any ideas they may have which are then shared with their peers at the meetings of the councils. Pupils say that their views are listened to and considered. Reasons are given if their ideas cannot be acted on. Written responses are given to points from the pupil questionnaires. This is an area that has been maintained since the last inspection; the views and involvement of the pupils are now having a stronger and more valued influence on the life of the school. Pupils are less involved in setting targets for their future performance. Targets are set by teachers and pupils need to be more involved so that they understand what it is they need to do to improve their work.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed good links with parents. There are very good links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Regular good quality information is given to parents on events and routines in the school, actively encouraging their involvement.
- There is a very good relationship with the local community and local businesses.
- The school has a very good partnership with other local schools.

Commentary

25. Frequent newsletters are sent home to parents that keep them fully informed about routines and events in school. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and the learning activities of their children. Regular information keeps parents up to date on school events and highlights activities they can become involved in. Some of this information, however, is presented in a bland manner that does not fully celebrate the success of the school. There is an open door policy that enables parents to speak to staff immediately if they have queries or

concerns and teachers talk to parents every day after the school day has finished. The reading diaries also provide a means of communication between parents and teachers. Questionnaires are often sent home to gather the views of parents, and these are followed by clear written responses to any ideas or concerns that are raised.

26. Parents are invited in to join in productions, consultation evenings, and information sessions such as on literacy and numeracy. They receive a written report annually, which is of good quality and enables parents to clearly know what their children can do, how well they are progressing and how they can help them continue to improve. Improving this was a key issue in the previous inspection, which has been fully addressed. A small number of parents feel that the school does not provide sufficient information and that they feel unable to approach it with concerns or suggestions. The inspection team found that the school does everything that can be reasonably expected to inform and involve all its parents.
27. The school has developed very good links with the community and local business. Recently work was done with artists in school to research the local heritage and legends. There are good relationships with the local church and chapel, which act as hosts to special events such as Christmas and Harvest celebrations and mock baptisms for the younger pupils. In addition to Teesdale Sports Centre, the village hall is also used for PE and productions, as the school hall is too small for these. Strong links have been nurtured with Glaxo Smithkline, with visits by children and also personnel. Staff from Northumbrian Water visit the school to talk about their work. Local businesses have made donations to the school. The school is enthusiastically supported by the Friends of Cotherstone School, who work very hard to raise additional funding for the school through many social events. Recent funding has been given to assist with the building alterations that have recently been completed.
28. The school joins neighbouring primary schools for PE at Teesdale Sports Centre. Shared lessons, teaching and planning enable a wide range of knowledge and experience to be drawn upon to benefit all pupils. The school takes part in many inter-sport competitions such as football, netball and cross-country with the local cluster schools and has a very good relationship with Teesdale Science College. Two-way mutually beneficial visits take place between Teesdale and Cotherstone schools, with good opportunities provided for staff and pupils to use the resources and facilities available at the science college.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school and leadership by the headteacher are very good. The school is very well managed and leadership by other key staff is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very high aspirations for the pupils and strives to improve their educational opportunities.
- A hard working 'second in charge' teacher makes significant contributions to developing both staff and the subjects of the curriculum. Good leadership and management are embedded throughout the school.
- Governors are very well informed and clearly influence the school's work and development.
- The skills of teaching assistants are used very well to support pupils throughout the school.

Commentary

29. The headteacher has been very successful in creating a calm and stimulating environment where pupils' overall development is secured and where pupils enjoy their learning. She is constantly seeking to maintain and improve very high standards and for this purpose is particularly effective in utilising school finances to get the best value from purchases, carefully considering whether they will support the school's drive to maintain very high standards. Her strategic planning reflects the school's goals and she is aware of the need to address ICT and physical education issues. Shortage of space is a regular consideration but the school carefully organises its use of the space it has and uses facilities outside the school, particularly for sport. This means that the effect on pupils' learning is being minimised. The headteacher has created a very dedicated staff team through effective inter-personal relationships and a commitment to staff development. The very good quality of teaching and learning has been maintained since the previous inspection. Staff work very well together and all are valued. Consultation with parents, pupils, staff and governors is a strong feature of decision-making.
30. The headteacher works closely with her 'second in charge' teacher, who has very successfully mentored the induction of teachers new to the school and ensured their continual development. Because of this good quality mentoring the teaching of colleagues new to the profession, and to the school, is good. She motivates them well and they are encouraged to develop their skills and competencies well. Like the headteacher she is committed to the school and its community. Her stimulating teaching and effective subject co-ordination provide very good role models. She analyses the school's attainment data and tracks individual progress thoroughly, sharing the information well with colleagues.
31. All staff have considerable responsibilities for subject development and are given time to monitor and evaluate progress. The information they gather informs the school's development plan well. Teaching assistants have well defined responsibilities and work very effectively with specific individuals, successfully contributing to their assessment. The school has some very capable volunteers, including the site manager, who are well organised to contribute effectively in lessons, supporting pupils' learning well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led and managed.
32. The governing body uses its considerable expertise to support the school but is also prepared to challenge it. Governors tackle difficult issues, such as staffing and resources, objectively. They are actively involved in the school's self-evaluation and play a full part in determining its future direction. They have responded well to the issues of the previous inspection and carefully monitored the school's improvement. Many regularly help in classrooms and, as a result, have well informed view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work well with subject leaders, effectively monitoring developments and reporting to the full governing body. They challenge well, asking pertinent questions about the attainment of pupils in particular subjects, and have a very good knowledge of the trends in pupils' attainment, the value added features and the performance of different groups of pupils. They ensure that all their duties are carried out effectively and feel that the pupils are "happy inside and happy outside the school." They have a very good understanding of the challenges faced by the school and have been relentless in their pursuit of improved facilities, culminating in the recent completion of additional classroom space. The headteacher and chair are determined to providing pupils with life skills that will enable them to develop fully. This teamwork contributes positively to the maintenance of very high standards.

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	332,494
Total expenditure	325,513
Expenditure per pupil	3,577

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	631
Balance carried forward to the next year	7,612

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

33. Provision in the foundation stage is good overall with good teaching and learning as a consistent feature. There is one admission date a year, with children currently accommodated in a class containing both reception and Year 1. Induction is particularly strong and good communication with parents on curricular and general matters continues throughout the year. This helps children start school and settle into school life. All adults in the foundation stage work hard to develop very good relationships with the children and each other. Working as a team they create a lively, safe and attractive environment. As a result of this, all children achieve well, including those with special educational needs. There is a good balance of teacher-led and child-selected activities with good planning and assessment systems. When children start in reception their attainment is broadly in line with the expected levels for their age except for spoken language, which is above the expected level. The outdoor play area is much improved since the previous inspection and reception children have access to more outdoor space. However, more large toys and climbing equipment are needed for progression in physical development and collaborative play.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A calm, orderly and supportive ethos is created to help children learn the correct way to behave.
- Children are taught courtesy and consideration.
- Staff are good role models.

Commentary

34. At the start of the school day children are warmly welcomed and there is a relaxed yet respectful relationship between children and adults. Routines and procedures such as self-registration and sitting in front of the teacher for the start of school activities are established and children follow them. Movement into the hall and outside the classroom for activity change-over is smooth and there is a minimum of fuss when equipment is distributed or collected. Children know when and how to prepare for activities and wash their hands before touching food. The classroom is organised to enable children to learn independently and the children access equipment quickly, handle it with care and return it to the correct place.
35. Staff demonstrate good manners at all times and the children copy them. Sharing and kindness are emphasised and as a result children help and listen to each other. Children are encouraged to share their news and become confident speaking to the class. Monitors are appointed for fruit distribution, feeding the fish and similar responsibilities. Children appreciate the need to take turns and they quickly learn not to interrupt

conversations and to raise their hands to attract attention. Teaching is good and many children are expected to exceed the early learning goals in this area.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening are given priority across the curriculum.
- Children are beginning to recognise letter and word shapes and appreciate the different purposes of writing.
- Adults frequently read to the children.

Commentary

36. Speaking and listening are developed well through role-play activities, through cooperation with other children and, because of the good children to adult ratio, the number of opportunities to communicate with an adult is increased significantly. The teachers are particularly good at encouraging challenging role play by asking questions, making commentaries or intervening with the appropriate vocabulary or supportive remark. They frequently participate in role-play.
37. Children are beginning to recognise initial sounds and letters and to suggest rhyming words. They enjoy listening to stories and recognise picture and textual clues to meaning. They know that the text of a book moves from left to right and from top to bottom. They also recognise in their post office role-play that writing a post card requires name, address, stamp and message and mark their cards accordingly. Children enjoy experimenting with new words and use a variety of languages, such as Spanish, to greet their teacher. Teaching is good in this area of learning and the children learn enthusiastically. The majority of children are on course to achieve the early learning goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for developing mathematical skills are integrated into many activities.
- Outdoor play is used to develop mathematical concepts.
- Teachers use a good range of equipment to support the teaching of basic concepts.
- Because learning is fun children achieve well.

Commentary

38. Teaching is good because teachers plan an interesting range of activities that cover all aspects of mathematical development. Cross-curricular links with subjects such as history, art and physical education are used effectively to teach and consolidate the basic concepts of number, colour, measure and time. Children are taught to use their fingers when counting and to move objects aside in order to be accurate. They also sing many action songs involving numbers. The outdoor area with its model making structures, its

sheds, its games and its environmental paths provides opportunities for children's basic concepts of space, shape and measure to grow. Teachers encourage children to build wooden houses to contain toy dinosaurs and support them using trial and error to make the best fit. They provide equipment so that children can sort and stack ready for use in the kitchen cupboard. They also help children choose suitable building components and sequence them to form a campervan. The children hear mathematical vocabulary throughout the day: terms such as before, after, less, more, first, second, later, opposite and half. Teachers frequently check their understanding of these terms and encourage children to use them in their own conversation. Children are on course to achieve the expected levels in this area with a minority achieving beyond them.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of learning opportunities are organised well to develop children's curiosity.
- Children are developing confident use of ICT.
- Teachers encourage children to share their interests and news well.

Commentary

39. The quality of teaching is good overall and learning opportunities are varied and support the development of children's curiosity. Teachers bring in interesting materials for the children to explore, such as exotic fruits. They are also able to see at close hand the growing of vegetables and flowers in the school garden. Visits are organised to the school pond and the children participate in school concerts and assemblies. In the role-play area they see how a post office is organised and act out the roles of customer, shopkeeper and postman. Children are also gaining confidence in using the computer and are becoming more accurate when using the mouse. Children are encouraged to speak to the class regularly and are asked to share their news. Most come prepared, having rehearsed at home with photos and artefacts. The other children in the class listen attentively and show great appreciation. This gives them the confidence to answer questions and many hold the audience's attention for an extended period. Most children are on course to reach levels above what is expected at the end of reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision makes a significant contribution to their personal, social and emotional development.
- Children enjoy their activities and their concentration is improved.
- Whilst the outdoor play area is very well utilized, space is restricted and children have few large toys.

Commentary

40. A very good range of activities are organised throughout the day to enable children to develop their manipulative skills well through the use of pens, pencils, small-world toys, scissors and paintbrushes. Children begin each day with a short physical education lesson, known as 'Brain Gym', in the schoolyard. This involves stretch and balance movements, use of both sides of the body, sequences, small apparatus and games. The children enjoy these activities because the teaching is very good, very enthusiastic and the teacher provides very good modelling. The children develop not only stamina and flexibility of movement but control and greater awareness of space. After this session pupils are alert for the next lesson and concentrate well. Teachers plan group and individual activities for the outdoor area and children have the opportunity to play with wheeled toys and build large structures with building blocks and everyday equipment such as boxes, clothes-horses and wood. It also provides opportunities for children to work side by side or to interact.

41. The children are very imaginative in their play and are encouraged to be so by staff and by the provision of non-specialised equipment, which adapts easily for different situations. Children were not seen on climbing frames during the inspection although they do have access to the school's general adventure equipment. There are plans to extend the outdoor play area, which is currently adequate for small numbers of children only. The number of wheeled toys and pathways are also very limited and provide no progression for vigorous exertion or co-operative movement. Children are expected to reach the early learning goals in this area with a minority of pupils working above national expectations.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development **is good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Role-play is particularly imaginative.
- A very good range of practical activities is provided.

Commentary

42. Teachers encourage speaking and listening in all activities and frequently read to the children using a variety of voices. In their questioning they stress the importance of feelings and frequently ask the children to project into those of fictional characters in a variety of situations. These features encourage pupils to empathise with characters and equip them to participate confidently, thoroughly absorbed in another world. Skilful intervention by staff develops the thinking, increases the interaction and often prompts characters to make a decision. The children are particularly creative in role-play. When they take home a class toy their diaries and thoughts are highly focused on the toy in their own environments and some attribute human characteristics to the toy. In the Brain Gym children experiment and are inventive with different movements because they are well supported by staff and confident in their own abilities. In art and craft many strive to work meticulously and they are sensitive in choosing and mixing shades of colour. Children are given good opportunities to be creative with a large range of craft and other materials including natural foliage. Teaching and learning are good in this area and children achieve well. The majority of children are on course to reach the early learning goals.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for speaking and listening are used well across the curriculum.
- Pupils are very competent and enthusiastic readers.
- Pupils are very confident with a variety of writing styles and purposes.
- ICT has been used infrequently, limiting its impact.
- Pupils' progress has been effectively tracked but pupils have little involvement.
- Teaching literacy using other subjects has been most effective.

Commentary

43. Good progress has been maintained since the last inspection in all aspects of this subject. By Year 6 the school has achieved very high standards over a number of years, although because of the small year group sizes and the effect of varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs there has been a year-to-year variation. In 2003 results in Year 2 in reading and writing were well above national averages, though reading was average compared with similar schools. Overall standards were above average. In Year 6 results were well above the national average with the majority of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment. Indications of the 2004 results are that standards were above average by Year 2 and well above average by Year 6.
44. During the inspection standards in English were judged to be above average in Year 2 and well above in Year 6. Children entered school with average literacy skills. They achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6.
45. The quality of teaching is, overall, very good. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. In lessons observed teaching was particularly successful in oral lessons because teachers used a variety of questioning techniques and organised group activities enabling pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills very well. Teachers used resources imaginatively to sustain interest and focus pupils' attention. Pupils make regular presentations to the class and as a result their confidence grows and they are able to make good eye contact with their audience and communicate well, fielding most questions successfully. These opportunities greatly enhance pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
46. Teachers engender a love of reading in their pupils and so it is with a great deal of pleasure that pupils regard books. In Year 1 pupils delight in imaginative follow-up activities to stories when they decipher special messages to find magic eggs in the sand. Phonics are very securely taught from reception onwards and by Year 2 pupils use these and a number of additional strategies to read and understand unseen words. They also understand how the library is organised and how to locate a particular book. By Year 6 pupils can use a range of reference material confidently and have definite views on authors, both fiction and non-fiction. Also, because teachers have encouraged pupils to read outside their preferences, pupils experience a wider range of texts and are knowledgeable about different writers' ways of working. One Year 6 pupil was able to

describe how in 'Lord of the Rings' character is revealed in description but in 'Harry Potter' it is via action and interaction. In the same way, because of extensive reading, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils are able to choose a wider list of adjectives to describe their Asterix characters rather than the purely naming them.

47. As a natural progression, because pupils have been taught to read like writers across a wide range of genre they have success with their own writing. They are frequently encouraged to express their feelings and to rationalise a point of view. Therefore in Year 6 when writing a holiday diary entry they can write with poignancy about the death of an oak or the loss of a pet and know how to alter effect by the length of their sentences and their choice of word. They are also confident refuting a point of view and justifying their own particular stance. Constructive marking, although not eliciting pupils' written response, always indicates how the quality of their writing can be improved. Also they are taught the features of most types of writing and are given structures and frameworks to ensure their success. In this way Year 2 pupils wrote effective and very appropriate instructions after constructing simple finger puppets.
48. The school has prioritised spelling and handwriting for school improvement and pupils are already benefiting from the individual instruction and modelling presented by teachers and the regular practice of high frequency words and word families across the curriculum. On the occasions when ICT was observed in English lessons it was used well to provide pupils with the opportunity to skim and scan a thesaurus and to access a report for analysis. However, the number of occasions when use of ICT was observed was very limited.
49. The co-ordinator for English has recently taken over full responsibility for the post having shared it with the previous post holder for a year. Prior to this, the subject was very well led by a teacher who tracked every child's attainment in English and discussed with staff but not children the implications of her findings for future teaching and school development. She was also able to monitor teaching and learning to ensure a consistency of approach across the school and to disseminate training in order to affect pupils' sensitivity to the spoken and written word. The success of the school's English policy can be seen in the following graphic descriptions and strong sentiments taken from current Year 6 pupils' writing:-
"My hopes of coming in the top three sank like a spoon in a bowl of porridge."
"Like an eagle from an eerie she swooped with her cloak down the mountain."
"I utterly disagree with the statement 'Living in the countryside is terrible. Towns are much better'. I have lived in town and countryside and I can surely say, "The countryside, in my opinion, is much better."

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Teachers help pupils to develop their language and literacy skills effectively across the curriculum. These include carefully planned and structured activities and situations that occur naturally. Speaking and listening are always given priority whatever the lesson and teachers plan for pupils to read on a daily basis. When pupils write in English lessons, the context, inspiration and purpose are also linked to other aspects of the curriculum such as in the diary writing of a Victorian factory girl or in the stories of Buddha.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils successfully build up their knowledge and skills securely, particularly through investigational activities.
- Teaching that is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6 makes mathematics relevant to pupils' experiences.
- Assessments are thorough and help match tasks closely to the needs of all pupils. Teachers need to involve pupils in the process to help them understand what they need to do to improve.
- Numeracy is emphasised well in other subjects.

Commentary

51. National curriculum assessments at the end of Year 2 were well above average in 2003. The test results for 2004 are likely to be above average. This represents good achievement because pupils enter the school with average attainment. The results in 2003 at the end of Year 6 were well above average both nationally and in comparison with those for similar schools. They placed the school in the top five per cent in the country. This shows very good achievement, maintaining the very high standards found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in the current Year 6 continue to achieve very well and work at standards well above average. National test results in 2004 are likely to be above average. During the inspection standards in Year 2 were judged to be above average and those in Year 6 well above average.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. A key factor in the successful maintenance of high standards is the balanced presentation of all strands of the subject and especially the emphasis given to using and applying mathematics. Teachers ask questions well and encourage pupils to explain their reasoning. Mental agility is fostered by number games so that pupils learn to think quickly and reuse what they have learnt before in new situations. Teachers effectively develop pupils' skills through practical activities. These are usually taken from realistic situations so that pupils see that what they are learning is important in the world in which they live. Pupils in Year 4, for example, learnt that estimating the size, dimensions and costs of different types of motorbike would help their teacher purchase the right machine and travel efficiently. They commented on how the machine would need to be adapted for her size and weight. Pupils in Year 6 were interested in calculating fractions and finding the best methods to compare them. Because they were encouraged to explain their strategy for calculating solutions they referred to practical applications, for example sharing things and allocating resources in the classroom.
53. The subject is led and managed very well. This is shown by the very good system of assessments, using statutory and non-statutory tests which are closely analysed. Lessons are monitored regularly and all the information gathered is used very effectively to help plan work to suit all groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants so that they play a full part in lessons. Higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from good links with the secondary school and sometimes tackle much more demanding work than is usual at their age. The school acknowledges that systems for assessment could now be extended to include pupils more in understanding what they need to do to improve. The very good teaching and provision for pupils of all abilities have contributed to the maintenance of high standards and represent a good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. A strength is the way in which numeracy lessons include other subjects and, therefore, reinforce the relevance of mathematics to virtually all areas of life. Pupils in Year 2 readily related their calculations in making puppets in design and technology. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 considered timings in presenting an assembly to their friends. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 effectively used mathematical calculations in experiments in science to discuss the weight of air. Tasks, therefore, made more sense. ICT is used by small groups of pupils to support and extend their learning in classrooms, but is yet to be fully utilised. Mathematics

is used well in most areas, especially in science for measurements, calculations and the presentation of data.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Investigations and experiments are central to lessons.
- Resources are used well.
- There is a very good balance between all strands of the subject.
- Work is well matched to pupils' needs, but they need to be involved more in the outcomes of assessment to enable them to understand what they can do to improve.

Commentary

55. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection. By Year 6 well above average standards have been maintained and the trend in results has been upward over the last four years. The results of national curriculum tests have regularly been well above both national and similar schools averages. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average, a similar picture to that reported previously. This represents good achievement because pupils entered the school with average attainment. Standards in the current Year 6 reflect those of the last four years. Test results for 2004 in Year 2 and Year 6 indicate similar standards. Results show that pupils achieve well by Year 2 and very well by Year 6.
56. This is the result of good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and very good teaching in Years 3 to 6, which enables pupils to learn well through stimulating first-hand experiences. The visual and 'hands-on' approach engages their desire to find out things. The thrill of discovery enables them to grasp new concepts and skills with enthusiasm and this in turn helps them retain and apply their knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Year 6, for example, had the opportunity to compare outcomes from several different experiments to find out whether air is all around us and if it has weight. Through practical applications the teacher presented studies as relevant and useful in real life and not simply a sterile exercise, so pupils based their predictions on real experiences and sensible ideas. For example, pupils moved around five different experiments answering questions like, "Why is it hard to run carrying a large piece of card?" They were then encouraged to devise sensible experiments of their own and this was extended to homework tasks. They could support their evaluations with precise information, clearly expressed using appropriate scientific vocabulary.
57. Good resources in general mean that pupils work in reasonably-sized groups and do not have to wait very long to use equipment. Sufficient equipment enabled the whole class of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils to work collaboratively and to discuss the outcomes of their experiments. The teaching assistant was fully involved in the activities and supported pupils well with appropriately challenging questions.
58. Pupils' achievement results from a suitable level of challenge. Lessons successfully contain all strands of the national curriculum programme. Pupils with special educational needs have the support of very well-briefed teaching assistants who make sure that questions are within their capabilities but always require plenty of hard thinking. The books of higher attaining pupils show that the level of detail required of them is high and they must regularly contend with variables which make for more intriguing experiments and require more complex answers.
59. Teachers have a good grasp of all aspects of the subject. Very good subject leadership and management also helps to ensure that the different parts of the good curriculum receive equal attention. Adults work well together as an effective team. Lesson planning is

regularly monitored and lessons are sampled. As a result, whether investigating conditions for plant growth, the effects of breaks in electrical circuits or balanced healthy diets pupils have a suitable experiment to focus their attention and demonstrate clearly what happens. As the result of these opportunities pupils could be more involved in the outcomes of the assessment of their progress. This will enable them to understand what it is they need to do to improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Because of the school's arrangement to teach ICT to small groups of pupils it was not possible to observe direct teaching of the subject. Discussions were held with the second in charge, the co-ordinator and pupils. Pupils' work and the recorded assessments of pupils' progress were sampled.

60. The co-ordinator took up her responsibilities in September 2004 and works alongside the second in charge, who previously led and managed the subject well. They work well with colleagues and have carefully evaluated provision. As the result of expensive additions to the building and limited financial resources the school has only recently completed the installation of new computers in each classroom. Currently two interactive whiteboards, to develop teaching and learning in the subject, are on order and expected in the near future. Good planning means there is a clear structure for the way that pupils will gain skills and knowledge and good guidance is provided for teachers to support the effective assessment of pupils' progress. Based on the sample of pupils' work standards, by Year 2 and Year 6, are average. As the result of the recent improvements pupils achieve well. The co-ordinator and the second in charge work well together and their enthusiasm is infectious, motivating colleagues and pupils to do well.
61. The bulk of the school's financial resources has been taken to add an additional classroom to the building, with a strategic decision taken to purchase additional computers and interactive whiteboards, when the work was completed. Staff have tackled the issues in a determined way. Accommodation currently prevents whole-class teaching, as computers are shared between the classrooms. Sessions for small groups are arranged successfully, giving pupils appropriate access to the resources. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use classroom based computers to support learning. In Years 3 to 6, pupils usually work individually or in pairs, on daily tasks, to support their work in other subjects. Such intermittent access to resources has inevitably meant that pupils have had limited experience of some elements of ICT. Teachers are aware of gaps and are planning to effectively ensure curriculum coverage for all, related to their needs and stage of development. The school has used available funds well in planning accommodation and resources of good quality. As a result of these challenges the teaching observed involved small groups and individual pupils.
62. Teachers are building their skills in the subject and have undertaken appropriate professional development. There is a clear vision for the subject that includes the building of staff knowledge and confidence and the direct teaching of skills to large groups. There are satisfactory links with other subjects. Work on display around the school has shown good use of ICT to help pupils present their work, particularly written work, in interesting ways. Observed lessons in science in Years 5 and 6, literacy in Years 3 and 4, mathematics in Year 2 and with a group of children with special educational needs, demonstrated appropriate use of ICT. For example, extending pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

HUMANITIES

Work was sampled in geography, history and religious education. One lesson was seen in history and none in geography. Because of timetabling it was not possible to see any

lessons in religious education. It is not, therefore, possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.

63. Discussions with pupils and with the subject co-ordinator for **religious education** reveal that subject planning is closely based on the national guidance for units of work and the locally agreed syllabus. Scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that they present work well and that lessons have been planned to meet the differing needs of all pupils. The work illustrates a number of aspects of the curriculum and pupils in Years 5 and 6 have studied many of the Christian stories and also examined other faiths, for example Buddhism, Judaism and Islam, at an appropriate level. Consequently, the school has successfully increased the contribution the subject makes to pupils' learning about cultures other than their own and now has a good range of artefacts that help pupils to understand the major world religions. Pupils' moral development benefits from the subject's strong links with the personal, social and health education development programme. For example, they look at the nature of human relationships by considering how we look after our pets, how we care for them and how we care for each other. Effective links with other subjects were illustrated in an assembly, presented by pupils in Years 3 and 4, learning about water and including music composed by the pupils.
64. **Geography** was sampled through looking at pupils' work on display, in photographs and in books and folders. In Year 2 pupils use globes, maps and plans and begin to build a geographical vocabulary. They know the geographical features of town, seaside and countryside and undertake studies of the village, the school's grounds and contrasting areas with Barnaby Bear. This work is extended in Years 3 to 6 and pupils study detailed street maps of housing, aerial views of local settlements, weather and world temperature maps. They are taught to draw plans to scale, study the water cycle and the River Tees from source to mouth and visit contrasting areas such as Hartlepool and Whitby. Residential adventure and outdoor activities enhance the geography curriculum.
65. Through the evidence was from displays and pupils' exercise books it is clear that all aspects of **history** are covered thoroughly: knowledge of a particular era is detailed; chronology is taught and pupils learn how to record it; work is presented in a variety of formats from art-work to individual project folders; pupils are taught to appreciate different points of view and they examine a variety of evidence both in the classroom and at locations such as Eden Camp, Bowes Museum and the Royal Armoury at Leeds. The school is particularly good at helping pupils find information from evidence and to realise the limitations of such evidence. Pupils therefore appreciate the need for corroboration. In Year 2 pupils used narrative writing, maps, diaries and pictures to communicate their findings on Florence Nightingale. In Years 3 and 4 pupils used pottery shards and web surfing to evaluate archaeological finds as an information source, whereas in Years 5 and 6 analysed a range of authentic documentation such as burial charts, will inventories and minutes from meetings to gauge the character, life-style and attitudes of a previous era. In the lesson observed pupils enjoyed the investigatory nature of the lesson and were very keen to discuss their findings.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Work was sampled in art & design, design & technology, music and physical education. One lesson was seen in each of these subjects. It is not, therefore, possible to form an overall judgement about provision in any of these subjects.

66. In **art and design**, examination of planning, evaluation of previous work and discussions with staff indicate that a wide range of experiences are provided. In a good art and design lesson pupils in Year 6 evaluated how human movement might best be represented in line drawings. They showed their appreciation through good discussion on the use of line and perspective before applying their knowledge in sketches and sharing ideas. Displays show that pupils use an appropriate range of media for both two- and three-dimensional work, suggesting that they follow a good curriculum. They have also worked closely with a number of local artists in producing large scale completed works of good quality around the school, for example a Cotherstone textile map, working with artists Rosie Thornton and Julie Ward. A large ceramic wall mural decorates the front wall of the school, the completion of a project with Judy Caplin.
67. Displays of **design and technology** work suggest an appropriate curriculum, successfully enhanced by visitors, for example to extend Year 3 and 4 pupils' understanding mouldable materials by making dough. Pupils in Year 2 have produced wheeled models, and pupils in Year 5 and 6 took studies in this area further to produce plays using shadow puppets they had constructed. The scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that they consider various forms of design, how their designs might be improved and also evaluate their finished products. Examination of planning, evaluation of previous work and discussions with staff indicate that a wide range of experiences are provided in the subject.
68. During the inspection, inspectors observed one **music** lesson and one assembly, which encompassed a musical presentation. It is clear that pupils enjoy singing and creating music, both in lesson time and in assembly. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a school production and play recorder or violin in Years 3 to 6. They also enjoy the performances of visiting musicians. Such opportunities contribute well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. The teaching observed in a Year 2 lesson was of very high quality and the pupils enjoyed their learning because "they had fun".
69. Since only one lesson in **physical education** was seen it is not possible to make a judgement about standards. In the lesson, for pupils in Year 3, the teaching was good. The lesson involved an effective warm-up and good questioning of pupils about the effects of exercise. Pupils enthusiastically took part in warm-up activities where they considered the effects of exercise as the result of well-focused questions from the teacher. They were encouraged to consider how they might improve their work and to offer constructive comments about the work of others whilst considering how best to use hockey sticks and to control the ball. As the result of wet weather the lesson had to be conducted indoors and illustrated the limitations of the building. A classroom space was used and movements adapted accordingly. The school effectively overcomes this issue by ensuring that all pupils in Years 3 to 6 take part in weekly indoor sessions at Teesdale Sports Centre. Pupils are also taught to swim using the Sports Centre facilities and most achieve the nationally expected standard of swimming 25 metres by Year 6. Many activities are provided for pupils outside the usual lesson times and older pupils take part in a residential visit that includes adventurous outdoor activities. Discussion with the headteacher suggests that whilst all strands of the curriculum are covered the school plans to improve its indoor space for physical education as soon as it can.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

70. Discussion with the headteacher and pupils, observation of one lesson and observations of assemblies indicate that this is an important part of the school's provision and guides a very strong ethos. All classes have one lesson a week on personal, social and health education in addition to inputs about health matters by the school nurse, attendance by Years 5 and 6 at a safety workshop and drugs education from the LEA's Drug Prevention Team. Pupils all take part in class councils and an elected representative from each year serves on the school council. The council has managed its own budget and purchased playground games; it has raised money for books and analysed and resolved a number of school issues. Environmental awareness is fostered by various garden projects including the growing of flowers and vegetables and tree planting. The school tries to recycle as many materials as it can. There is also regular litter picking. Social issues are discussed in circle-time lessons as well as in assemblies and also when the need arises. Each class appoints responsibility monitors and there are also school monitors for lunchtime, fruit distribution, and cloakrooms and for any other similar job. The school has active links with a number of local industries including Durham Business Executive. Further links with the community are very strong. The school raises money for various charities and holds a harvest festival at the Methodist chapel. Pupils also participate in the fun weekend ecumenical service. The school is currently involved in developing a partnership with schools in Europe. In these ways the school successfully works hard to provide a well-rounded citizenship education.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
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	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).

