

INSPECTION REPORT

DEARHAM FOUNDATION PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dearham, Maryport

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112413

Headteacher: Mrs M J Coates

Lead inspector: Peter Sandall

Dates of inspection: 17th to 19th January 2005

Inspection number: 266720

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: Foundation
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 198

School address: The Went
Dearham
Maryport
Cumbria
Postcode: CA15 7HR

Telephone number: 01900 812518
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
Name of chair of Mrs L G Boal
governors:

Date of previous 28th June 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dearham is a one-form entry primary school serving the village of the same name in Cumbria and the surrounding rural area, although some of its pupils, particularly the older ones, come from the nearby town of Maryport. Parents and governors regard it as being important to the local community. There is a balance of boys and girls in its 198 pupils, almost all of whom are of white British descent. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and the socio-economic profile of the school is below average. Children's attainment on entry is below average, particularly in speaking and listening skills. As a result the school is supported by the 'Sure Start' initiative. However, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the whole school, including those with statements, is below average. The number entitled to a free school meal is broadly average. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school has just been completely re-roofed and is on the point of having two new classrooms, a library and an ICT suite built, which will improve the accommodation. A significant number of pupils join the school after Year 2; for example, 22 per cent of the current Year 6 pupils fall into this category. The school was awarded the 'Activemark' in 2003 for its contribution to the physical education of the pupils.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25771	Peter Sandall	Lead inspector	Science, citizenship, music, physical education
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27242	Enid Rice	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum, English, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology
22881	George Halliday	Team inspector	Special educational needs, mathematics, religious education, history, geography

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Dearham offers its pupils a **good** education and gives satisfactory value for money. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment. They achieve well and reach average standards overall, due to good teaching in a very good climate for learning. Leadership is good, but insufficient attention is given to forward financial planning.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- Most pupils achieve well, but not enough higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are reaching the higher levels in their national test results.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported by a hardworking and effective team of staff.
- Governors are committed and supportive, but have not planned for the use of a substantial financial surplus.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good, leading to very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Opportunities for enrichment and links with the local community are both very good.
- Attendance and punctuality are good.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, and has the capacity to improve further. Standards are not as high as at the time of the last inspection, but the recent initiatives of the headteacher are effective and improvements in the quality of education are beginning to make an impact on test results. The key issues from the previous report have been met effectively, although long-term financial management lacks clarity.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. NB. The relatively small numbers of pupils in each year mean caution should be used when interpreting this data.*

Pupils' **achievement is good**. Children enter the Foundation Stage with below average standards and are in line to meet the expected goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the reception class, and exceed them in physical development. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are currently reaching average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, as they are by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. However, standards in these subjects have been above average for the last five years at Year 2, indicating good achievement over time for these pupils. Test results in Year 6 do not give the full picture of the achievement of the

pupils. Over a fifth of the pupils in the current Year 6 joined the school within the last four years, giving the school less opportunity to influence their progress. The Year 6 results compared to similar schools in 2004 for mathematics fell because too few pupils attained the higher Level 5, an issue the school is currently addressing. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils achieve well because their work is well planned and they are well supported. As a result, a high proportion of pupils generally reach the expected Levels 2 and 4 in national tests at Years 2 and 6, and a good percentage attain the higher Level 3 at Year 2. Higher attaining pupils do not always reach Level 5 in Year 6 as they are sometimes given insufficiently demanding challenges. However, recent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are starting to impact on the standards attained by older pupils.

Pupils display very good personal qualities, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good. They have very good attitudes to school and each other and very good relationships with adults. This, coupled with generally very good behaviour, contributes to a very good ethos and environment for learning. Both attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education and the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Good lessons were seen in all classes, with half the teaching seen being good and a further third very good, and all teaching was at least satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and prepared, methods support the teacher's intentions and pupils are given plenty of encouragement. As a result they are generally interested, work hard and achieve well. High expectations of good behaviour are apparent in all classes and make a strong contribution to a positive working atmosphere, with little time wasted. However some higher attaining pupils are capable of being given further independence, with greater expectations of what they can do, and older pupils in particular lack an understanding of the specific skills they need to improve. Where pupils are given written targets they respond well. Good use of skilled support staff enhances the progress of lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs.

The school's curriculum is enriched very effectively through pupils' participation in sporting and other activities and a range of visits, which also contribute to very good community links. Pupils are well cared for, and through class and school councils have good opportunities to influence change. There are good links with parents and carers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher leads a strong, supportive and united staff and strategic planning is clear and effective. Teamwork is very good, involving all members of the school community and recognising their contribution. These are important developments and have happened in a relatively short time since the headteacher's appointment. As a result, there have been recent improvements in the quality of education and standards are now rising in Years 3 to 6. Day-to-day management is smooth and effective. Governors have a good understanding of the school's current position and meet statutory requirements. However, whilst accounting procedures are efficient, strategic financial planning is unsatisfactory as insufficient attention is given to the future use of monies which are carried forward from year to year.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents attending the meeting, as well as the great majority of those returning questionnaires, were very positive about the school and expressed a high degree of satisfaction, and inspectors generally agree with their views. Pupils' questionnaires revealed no concerns, and their written comments show how much they appreciate the good relationships between pupils and staff. Discussions with pupils both before and during the inspection confirm these views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards further by increasing challenge and targeting improvement, particularly for higher attaining pupils;
- ensure strategic financial planning is closely linked to supporting educational priorities and reducing the carry forward to recommended levels.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good overall, with pupils reaching average standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well from a below average starting point.
- Standards in reading are above average throughout the school.
- A recent focus on writing has improved standards by Year 6.
- Standards are average in the core subjects by Year 6.
- Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, are well supported and achieve well.
- Higher attaining pupils, while generally achieving well, do not always do as well as they might.

Commentary

1. The school's results in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 have been above the national average in four of the last five years, and are generally better than those of schools that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal. Test results in Year 6 show greater fluctuation in English, mathematics and science, and the trend of improvement over the last five years is below that found nationally. As a majority of pupils enter school with below average attainment and are leaving with average standards, their achievement over time is good. The pace of improvement has been slower for older pupils for a variety of reasons. The good and very good teaching now taking place has had less time to impact on this four year key stage, as the new leadership team has only been in place for two years. Also, a significant number of pupils joins the school after Year 2. Finally, not enough of the Year 6 pupils are reaching the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science to improve the school's average points score in national tests.
2. Children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of attainment which are below the average found nationally. This is particularly the case with their speaking and listening skills, and some children have difficulty in communicating and expressing themselves. Due to good teaching and support, including access to the 'Sure Start' initiative, children make good progress and most are in line to meet the goals they are expected to attain by the end of the reception year. In their physical development, many children exceed these goals, because a good range of opportunities is provided to encourage these skills.
3. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2 as can be seen by the results in the table below, where their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in tests has been above the national average in each subject for the last two years. These good results relate to the improved quality of teaching and learning in the school, which is in turn connected to the positive initiatives put in place by the new headteacher. This structured and considered approach has allowed co-ordinators, particularly in the core

subjects, to have a better oversight of the curriculum and there is a clear format for teaching, learning and assessment. Good use is also being made of new classroom teaching aids such as interactive whiteboards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (16.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.9 (15.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.1 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in national tests at Year 6 show good recent improvement in English, where results which were below the national average are now above it, and are also above those found in similar schools. The school devotes considerable time to developing the key skill of reading, and standards are above average throughout the school. Last year a concerted effort to improve writing, particularly for boys in Years 3 to 6, paid good dividends, and standards have risen. The introduction of specific targets for pupils is also having a positive effect.
- Last year's national test results for Year 6 pupils in mathematics and science were disappointing, especially in mathematics. This reflects both the ability of the year group and former weaknesses in the provision for mathematics, which have now been addressed. A thorough analysis has been carried out to pinpoint weaker areas, and the school has successfully implemented improvements so that current standards in Year 6 are now judged to be average. The effect of the new leadership, outlined above, is likely to take longer to have an impact in Key Stage 2, where there are four year groups. Attainment in Years 3 to 6 is also affected by the number of pupils who enter the school having started their education elsewhere, and have therefore not benefited from the good provision before Year 3. For example, in the current Year 6 class 22 per cent have joined the school since Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (26.1)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.7 (26.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.8 (28.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The attainment of pupils currently in Years 3, 4 and 5 indicates that standards are rising, and the improved quality of teaching and learning, which is spread fairly evenly across classes, means the school is now in a good position to improve standards. This is particularly the case for lower attaining pupils or those who have a special educational need. Both the quality of the teachers and classroom assistants offering them support, and the good planning for these pupils, ensures that in most lessons they make good progress and achieve well. The picture for higher attaining pupils is more varied. They too, generally achieve well. However, in some lessons the challenge they are offered is insufficient to fully extend them, and while they usually produce acceptable work there is less evidence of high or exceptional standards. They do better in English, where specific targets are set and pupils know what they must do to reach them.

7. Pupils attain average standards in information and communication technology (ICT). They acquire the relevant ICT skills, but the limited number of computers restricts the opportunity to practise and develop these. In addition, individual research is limited by restricted access to the Internet and the lack of a library constrains access to reference books. However, the new building work about to take place includes appropriate plans to enhance this provision. Standards in physical education and history are satisfactory. Other subjects were sampled, so it is not possible to report on standards, but the evidence seen indicates that pupils achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school to learn.
- Relationships are very good.
- The school sets very high expectations of behaviour.
- Pupils respect the views of others.
- Pupils' moral and social attitudes are very good.
- Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good.

Commentary

8. Pupils are very keen to learn and listen carefully in lessons, showing respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They respond very willingly to teachers' expectations of high standards of behaviour and get on very well with teachers and each other. The inspection bears out parents' views that behaviour is very good. At lunchtimes pupils are sensible and cooperate with supervisors. There is very little bullying and none was seen during the inspection. There are effective procedures for dealing with it when it does occur. The freedom from harassment, including racism, reflects the school's strong emphasis on promoting personal values and attitudes.
9. Parents say that their children enjoy coming to school and pupils themselves confirm this. This is reflected in above average attendance and good punctuality. The school does all it can to ensure pupils attend school regularly. The rate of unauthorised absence is about average. In the school year 2003/4 there were three temporary exclusions for unacceptable behaviour. This year one pupil was excluded and has subsequently left the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.7
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.5
National data	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

No of pupils on roll
194

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
3	0

10. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection because of the school’s determined efforts to bring this about. Pupils respond very well to the school’s provision for their moral and social development. Parents strongly agree that it leads to their children’s greater maturity as they get older. Pupils agree that they are trusted to do things on their own and are given responsibilities to encourage this. For example, they vote class representatives onto the school council to put forward their opinions. They agree that the school listens to and acts on their views. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have special responsibilities, for instance in looking after younger pupils at playtimes, or those who may be unhappy.
11. Pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong. This is reflected both in how well they behave and their expectations of others’ behaviour. They are patient with those whose behaviour lets them down, and show a mature tolerance. Inspectors frequently remarked on pupils’ politeness, not just to adults but between themselves as well. This calm and ordered atmosphere supports teaching and learning very effectively; for example, pupils work very well with each other as discussion partners in various lessons.
12. Pupils’ spiritual and cultural awareness is good. They respond well to the improved opportunities for reflection in assemblies and religious education lessons. A previous weakness in the school’s provision for their cultural development has been remedied. As a result, pupils gain good awareness of their local and national cultures and of multicultural issues. The curriculum accommodates these aspects of provision well and there is a wide variety of visits and visitors. For instance, pupils visit a theatre, learn from a local professional artist, experience Indian food and visit a synagogue.
13. Children in the reception class are on course to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the academic year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The good teaching is beginning to impact on standards throughout the school. Assessment and the curriculum are both satisfactory. A very good variety of activities and visits enriches pupils’ experiences and there are very good links with the local community. Pupils are well cared for and receive good support and guidance. There are good systems to seek both pupils’ and parents’ views, and parents receive a good level of information to help them support their children’s education.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching seen in all classes during the inspection was predominantly good or better.

- Teaching is strongest in Years 1 and 2, where over half the lessons seen were very good.
- Some of the higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
- The setting by ability of pupils in mathematics contributes to the learning of all.
- Teaching assistants are very well involved and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils are not always clear about their progress, or what they must do to get better.

Commentary

14. The school is a purposeful and well-ordered learning community in which teachers, teaching assistants and pupils play a positive part. Lessons are, for the most part, well planned and prepared, and both teachers and learning support assistants are adept at encouraging and involving pupils in their learning. The importance of good behaviour is emphasised by teachers and responded to by pupils, resulting in time being spent on learning, rather than managing behaviour.
15. There is an appropriate focus on the skills of literacy and numeracy, particularly in the lessons devoted specifically to these subjects. These skills are used and applied in other subjects, but there is not always consistent planning to ensure that good opportunities are identified in advance. There is less evidence of pupils having the opportunity to use and practise their ICT skills in the context of other subjects, mainly because only a few computers are available to be used in each of the classes. However, the school has appropriate plans to address this through the imminent building of a new computer suite.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (33%)	15 (50%)	5 (17%)	0	0	0

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

16. As is evident in the table above, all teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, with half being good and another third very good. This is a positive picture which indicates that recent improvements are effective and that the school is well placed to raise standards further, especially for older pupils, who are now receiving good teaching throughout their time in school. As a result, previous problems with underachievement by Year 6 are being addressed effectively. Strategies are in place to enable both senior management and core subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning across the school and these are helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Good teaching takes place in all classes, but is most consistent in Years 1 and 2, where all lessons were graded as good or better.
17. The school groups pupils by ability for mathematics across the school from Years 1 to 6. This works well, ensuring pupils of all abilities are taught at a suitable level. It is particularly helpful to lower attaining pupils, who often work in small groups with a teaching assistant to support them, and as a result receive plenty of individual attention. This grouping is addressing the previous concern about the standards reached by higher attaining pupils. However, the way in which a structured scheme is followed sometimes denies them the challenge offered by open-ended investigations.

18. The use of individual targets for pupils in English is beginning to focus pupils' attention on the specific skills they need to acquire in order to improve. However, teachers have not yet extended this practice to science and mathematics and the marking in these subjects does not yet give pupils an idea of the ways to improve. There are some examples of this, but it is not used consistently across subjects. Teachers routinely refer to the learning intentions at both the beginning of lessons and at their end, and encourage the pupils to decide how well they have met these individually. This is good practice.
19. Pupils who have special educational needs are fully included in all class activities. Teachers' planning reflects the targets set out in their individual education plans. Teaching assistants play a good part in supporting these pupils in lessons, helping them to meet their targets and praising their achievements to boost their confidence. Teaching assistants are fully involved in both planning and assessment. Teachers monitor pupils' targets regularly and adjust them accordingly. Pupils are withdrawn as necessary for intensive instruction, especially by a teaching assistant well qualified in special educational needs.
20. Children in the Foundation Stage are well taught. The direct involvement of teachers and support staff with the children is good, and their good knowledge of the children is a real asset which helps inform accurate assessments. Strategies and methods are carefully chosen to involve the children directly in their learning, and there is a strong emphasis on discussion and the use of language.
21. There is a range of good assessment procedures, providing detailed information about pupils' attainment and progress, but current systems have not been in place long enough in some subjects to make accurate judgements about how well they are used in the longer term. Certainly they have been well devised, and if used consistently are likely to provide an accurate picture on which to base future teaching and learning. Careful analysis of pupils' answers to test papers leads to teaching being targeted at areas of weakness. The strong teamwork involving both teaching and non-teaching staff provides a good knowledge of individual pupils, and forms an effective basis for greater involvement of pupils in assessing their own learning.

The curriculum

There is a satisfactory curriculum in Years 1 to 6 and a good curriculum in the Foundation Stage. There are very good opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation is currently unsatisfactory and the quality and range of learning resources is adequate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is well planned with a good balance of practical activities.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, especially for their literacy development.
- Support staff are very well used and make a very good contribution to pupils' achievements.
- The use of computers across the curriculum is insufficient to contribute to raising standards.
- The lack of a central library limits the opportunities for independent research, especially for older pupils.

- Extra-curricular provision is very good.

Commentary

22. In the nursery and reception class the curriculum is well resourced in terms of staffing, accommodation and learning materials. Children learn effectively through practical play activities and adults are quick to intervene to move children on. Curriculum plans are clear and adults ensure that all areas of learning receive the right emphasis. As a result children settle quickly and achieve well. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught all the subjects in the national curriculum. There is satisfactory overall planning to ensure that pupils meet all the relevant areas in each subject and re-visit them at a higher level where necessary. A weakness in the level of challenge in mathematics for higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 has been satisfactorily addressed.
23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is also well planned. The school takes very good care to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs have equal access to the curriculum. They are largely taught with their peers, but receive some teaching in small withdrawn groups, largely to supplement their literacy skills. Pupils with special needs receive the same entitlement to ICT as other pupils and also make use of specific programs designed to support their learning. In addition the school has purchased three lap-top computers for the use of these pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils on the school's special needs list in depth and work very well together. Pupils' targets are carefully thought out by each teacher working closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator. The targets are focused on each pupil's identified needs and adjusted in the light of assessments so that pupils make good progress and achieve well as their needs change.
24. Numbers of support staff are satisfactory. Existing support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement, not just for younger children or for pupils with special educational needs, but throughout the school. Resources are adequate, though in ICT, whilst numbers of computers are average for a primary school they are not sufficiently available for the pupils to use. In addition, there is no central library. New interactive whiteboards have been purchased for some classrooms and are being used effectively to broaden and stimulate learning, an example of positive leadership and management in action.
25. Extra-curricular provision is a strength of the school. After-school clubs, which cover both sport and creative work, are well supported by both staff and pupils. Visits are made which enrich the curriculum, for example theatre trips, and older pupils have the opportunity for residential visits both in this country and abroad. Strong community links have been made and visitors often come into school to talk to pupils. Suitable health education programmes are in place to prepare pupils for adult life.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and health and safety provision for the pupils is good. They are given good support, advice and guidance. The school involves them effectively through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are good.

- The induction arrangements for pupils are good.
- Pupils are generally very happy with the school and appreciate their teachers.
- There is good provision for educating pupils about citizenship.

Commentary

26. Regular health and safety surveys and risk assessments are carried out. Registers are marked properly at the start of the day and at the beginning of the afternoon. Healthy eating is encouraged; younger pupils are given fruit daily and all pupils are encouraged to drink water. Arrangements at lunch and playtime are good, when appropriate supervision is maintained and the pupils play together well, using a good range of play equipment.
27. All members of staff have first aid training. The school has a child protection policy and the headteacher is responsible for its implementation. She has received the necessary training and has fed back the information to both teaching and non-teaching staff as part of a training day. Plans are in place for training to be provided for lunch-time supervisors. This represents good practice.
28. The induction arrangements for pupils are good. Home visits are made before entry to the nursery and meetings are held for parents. There is a staggered start for children in the nursery and reception classes. A Foundation Stage booklet is provided for parents. The school is quick to intervene positively where there are academic or behavioural concerns, and problems are dealt with immediately and professionally. Each class in Years 3 to 6 has a 'worry box' which gives pupils an opportunity to raise concerns, anonymously should they so wish.
29. Pupils are generally very happy at school and appreciate their teachers, something which came across very strongly in the questionnaires completed by pupils from Years 2 to 6. While there are high expectations, pupils are allowed to be themselves, keeping their individuality and sense of humour. The annual reports have a useful section reporting on pupils' personal development.
30. There is good provision for education in citizenship. Regular timetabled lessons on personal, social and health education throughout the school build pupils' understanding in these areas. Each class has its own council which feeds pupils' views and concerns into a school council. This operates on a weekly basis, with elected members from Year 2 to Year 6. Pupils can point to differences which have come about as a result of their suggestions, such as the arrangements for dinner time. However, there is no access to a specific budget in order to give pupils some idea of cost effectiveness and value for money, although money has been raised on occasion.
31. Pupils are chosen to represent their peers and Year 6 pupils organise school-wide elections on a range of subjects. Pupil questionnaires are completed annually and the response is considered by both staff and the school council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents, and very good links with the local community. There are satisfactory links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents are very supportive of the school, which involves parents by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.
- There are very good links with the school's local community, including the churches, the elderly and sporting organisations.
- Parents give good support to their children's work at home.

Commentary

32. Regular letters are sent to parents, and nearly all parents believe they are well informed. The pupils' annual reports tell parents what their child knows, understands and can do and give general targets for improvement. There are two opportunities a year for parents to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher and these are very well attended. Parental questionnaires covering a range of issues are sent out each year. The school welcomes parents' views and responds to them positively. Pupils are provided with regular homework and parents are given a termly outline of their child's work. Parental help for their child's work at home is good. Parents find all school staff helpful and readily available to deal with problems or concerns, an attitude positively encouraged by the school's leadership.
33. The 'Friends of Dearham School' hold a variety of fund-raising events. The money raised is used to purchase resources, for example televisions and compact disc players. A small band of parental volunteers, and some community residents, help in the school on a regular basis. Parents are encouraged to take a hot dinner with their child, which as well as improving the take-up of school dinners gives parents a good opportunity to experience the ethos of the school.
34. The school has very good links with local churches and local clergy come into school to take assemblies. Pupils participate in a wide range of sports which give pupils opportunities to meet children from other schools. The elderly in the local community are encouraged to come into the school, for example for special occasions and services, and the school arranges transport where this is needed. Pupils raise money for a variety of charities, including the needy in their own community.
35. The school makes full use of the local community to enhance the curriculum, for example taking pupils on visits to a local quarry and a local shop to enhance life skills. St John's Ambulance personnel come into the school to give pupils first-aid training, and there are talks on road safety. Most pupils transfer to Netherhall School for their secondary education and satisfactory links are in place, with pupils visiting prior to entry. Other inter-school links come through the Maryport Consortium of schools, which run joint training sessions and bid for funding together. Work experience students come into school from the Lakes College and local secondary schools. Students also come into the school to complete their teaching practice.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good overall and management satisfactory. The headteacher and key staff provide good leadership. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has built a strong and effective team in a relatively short time.

- Development planning is clear and focused in the short term.
- Subject leaders have detailed plans to raise standards, but have little influence on their budgets.
- Long-term financial plans are unsatisfactory and do not consider how best to use considerable surplus funds.
- Day-to-day management is smooth and effective.
- All adults in the school provide very good role models for the pupils.
- The governing body are supportive and involved, but do not have a clear view of development priorities.

Commentary

36. The headteacher, governors and all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, identify strongly with the school, work hard and are committed to its success. The result is a sturdy shared ethos in which both parents and pupils are valued partners. There is a determination to provide good academic standards, and there is also a proper and laudable focus on providing all aspects of schooling, some less tangible, which deliver a broad curriculum and produce children with well rounded personal qualities. This very good ethos is achieved partly through high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and also by the way in which all adults in the school act as very good role models for the pupils, in the way in which they deal both with the pupils and with each other.
37. The headteacher has been in post for a relatively short time. She has worked hard and successfully to build a united team of staff who have the pupils' best interests at heart. As a result, there has been a recent improvement in standards due to the consistently good quality of teaching, which is effectively monitored and encouraged by the headteacher. She is well supported by the assistant headteacher and management team, and by all who work in the school. Governors are conscientious and supportive and are increasing their involvement in the work of the school. The key building blocks are in place on which to base further development and improvement.
38. Many subject co-ordinators have been recently appointed, including those responsible for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. While it is too early to judge their impact, the quality of their forward planning indicates a very promising start. A number of initiatives are under way with the clear intention of raising pupils' achievement and therefore standards overall. The one area lacking in all co-ordinators' planning is an input into financial decisions on how much money will be available to develop the subject; instead, planning is expected to fit a budget which is usually based on historical figures, rather than the needs of the pupils.
39. Day-to-day management is good. Non-teaching staff are clear about their roles and need little direction. The administrator works efficiently and parents and pupils find her helpful and approachable. Targets for staff development are appropriate and relevant and are closely linked to school improvement. Several of the staff joined the school as newly qualified teachers within the last three years; they are pleased with the level of support they have received and the quality of their teaching bears this out. The smoothness with which change has been effected is indicative of good management in these areas.
40. Whilst financial accounting of money committed is good, the management of the school's overall budget is unsatisfactory. The school makes use of the support

available from the local education authority, and both the headteacher and governors have a clear oversight of spending from month to month. However, the school is currently carrying forward an under-spend well in excess of the 5% recommended. While governors are aware that there is likely to be some future expense related to equipping the new building, development planning makes no reference to this, and there is no attempt to cost future expenditure or target this surplus to best support the pupils' learning. Governors have not challenged the school about the lack of links between financial resources and carefully targeted spending.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	523,843	Balance from previous year	77,169
Total expenditure	536,186	Balance carried forward to the next	64,826
Expenditure per pupil	2,708		

41. In other respects, governors are helpful and supportive. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of the way in which the key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. They receive regular reports from subject co-ordinators and many take the opportunity to visit the school and see it working. Committees work effectively and produce helpful reports, and governors are involved in the construction of the school development plan and monitor its progress. The governing body ensures that the school meets all statutory requirements.
42. The management of special educational needs is good, with close co-operation between the school and professional agencies. The co-ordinator is well organised and up to date in her professional development. She has established effective procedures, balancing support in the classroom with specific teaching for small groups. There is an emphasis on early identification, so that pupils get the help they need as early as possible. Support staff are effectively deployed and there is good evidence of teamwork throughout the school; for example, the special needs co-ordinator leads performance management for all teaching assistants. Teachers write the individual education plans for the pupils in their classes together with the co-ordinator, a practice which is both supportive and developmental. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all its pupils, but still does not consistently provide challenge for higher attainers.
43. Parents are very pleased with the way the school is run. This comes both through the responses to the questionnaires and the comments made at the parents' meeting. As well as praise for the headteacher, the open and friendly atmosphere and the ready availability of teachers were commented on, as well as the 'brilliant' caretaker, who is 'always here, can't do enough and knows every child by name'.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the nursery class from a wide geographical area, and some children move to other schools at the reception stage. Induction procedures are effective. There is a close relationship between home and school, and this leads to a smooth transition on entry. Children enter the nursery with attainment that is below average for their age. Due to consistently good teaching in all the areas of learning, and good support by teaching assistants, children achieve well. By the end of reception, they attain the early learning goals in all six areas of learning, and exceed these in physical development. There has been good improvement in the provision since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good overall and outdoor provision has improved. The curriculum has also been enriched, with stimulating activities focused to meet all children's needs. It is well planned, practical and provides a good balance between direct teaching and child chosen activities.
45. The co-ordinator for early years leads and manages the provision effectively. A good team of staff has been created who share consistently high expectations for the children. Teachers and their assistants know the children well and meet their needs successfully, including any children with special educational needs. Assessment is a strength as all staff are involved in regularly collecting and recording observations of children's experiences and achievements. This vital information is well used to plan for the next steps in learning and for each child's foundation profile. Children are also beginning to assess their own work and this is an area for further development. Both the inside accommodation and outdoor facilities are used effectively to promote learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teamwork promotes clear procedures and high expectations for children's social and emotional development.
- Due to good teaching, children learn and achieve well, attaining average standards in this area of learning.

Commentary

46. Children achieve well due to the good quality of teaching, and are on course to reach the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. The teachers and their assistants promote children's awareness of social responsibility by choosing children to be daily helpers. For example, they fetch equipment and help to put it away. Children are able to work unsupervised and they behave well and share resources. In the nursery, children play in "Castle Cafe" discussing menus for the day. In the reception class, children work independently and are able to listen well. In a literacy lesson, for example, the children tidied away efficiently and moved to the

carpet ready for the next instruction. Clear explanations from teachers encourage children to co-operate and work well together.

47. Children are beginning to develop social awareness. In another literacy lesson, for example, they listened well when two boys who had a birthday told the class about their day. Children walk sensibly to the hall for assembly. In class, they move safely and have no difficulty in settling to new activities. The emphasis on this area of learning, where children take turns and join in together, helps them to develop good social skills. There is a consistent team approach, which is common to all adults. This results in good relationships, which help the children to develop positive attitudes to learning, values and behaviour in both the nursery and reception classes.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall and all staff provide many opportunities for children to develop good language skills.
- The focus on conversation helps to develop speaking and listening skills, which are well below average on entry for a significant number of children.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught systematically and well.

Commentary

48. Most children achieve well and are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the reception year, because they enjoy consistently good teaching. Emphasis is placed on developing speaking and listening skills from an early age and this contributes positively to the standards attained. For example, some children find talking about their work difficult in the nursery, but by the time they are in the reception class they show a better understanding of language and talk with greater confidence. In a very good lesson observed, based on "The Three Goats", nursery pupils were encouraged to tell the story using puppets. This good use of resources enabled them to describe characters and remember key phrases from the story. The lesson ended with a performance of the story using the puppet theatre. This activity stimulated the children, giving them an opportunity to perform for others, ably supported by the class teacher.
49. Children in both nursery and reception classes have ample opportunities to share books and are supported well by all staff. Books are displayed as an extension to topic work. For example, in "Castle Café", children are encouraged to refer to cookery books when role playing in the kitchen. In the reception class, children are developing good phonic knowledge and many are beginning to write independently. Children read simple classroom captions and have confidence to talk about their favourite stories. The reading areas contain a wide range of material, including some with an appropriate multi-cultural flavour.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults take every opportunity to develop mathematical understanding and as a result children achieve well and are on track to meet the early learning goals in mathematics.
- A good variety of interesting, practical activities stimulate the children and support their learning.
- Good use is made of mathematics in a range of everyday situations.

Commentary

50. Teaching and learning are good in mathematics. Adults work diligently to develop the children's skills and particularly their mathematical language, an area which many children find difficult. Staff question children while they are working, always trying to encourage mathematical understanding. For example, some children are confident when they solve problems. A child in the reception class commented "five and five makes ten", when the class had clapped for two boys who had their fifth birthday. The children are also aware of comparisons in mathematics such as 'large' and 'small', but sometimes find them hard to explain. For example, they often confuse 'higher' and 'highest'.
51. Children make good progress in number recognition and counting because this aspect of learning is reinforced in an incidental way throughout each day. For example, nursery children sang a "snowman" song that gave counting opportunities, ably assisted by the classroom assistant. Good self-esteem is encouraged, and children are confident to use numbers due to the praise given to all those who try hard. Children are in line to meet the expected goals by the end of the reception class.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that children learn well.
- Teachers provide a broad curriculum with a variety of practical activities to promote interest and stimulate learning.

Commentary

52. In a free choice activity period, children used a computer program with confidence. They worked in pairs and helped each other. The children were challenged to work independently and were supported well when appropriate. In an outside activity lesson, a 'windy day box' was available with windmills and streamers for children to test the effect of the breeze. When children used construction toys they worked attentively, often choosing to work in a group with other children.
53. Classroom displays indicate that both nursery and reception classes experience a good variety of activities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world about them. They have made a visit to see a newly born foal and walked to the village noting important landmarks. A topic on food has been extended to include food around the world. Children were introduced to celebrations at Christmas when they designed their own hats and planned their party food. An Indian visitor brought garments to

school, giving the children experience of a multi-cultural nature. Children achieve well and are on track to meet the expected goals in this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and are on line to exceed the goals expected by the end of the reception class because there are many opportunities to develop physical skills.
- Children are developing a very good awareness of space.
- Children develop very good confidence using large apparatus.

Commentary

54. Children have very good opportunities inside and outside to develop their co-ordination. A wide range of equipment is available to use outdoors for climbing and balancing, including a slide. Small apparatus such as cars are used effectively to develop manipulative skills in the sand tray. Good cross-curricular links are made. For example, in one lesson linked to literacy, children used a bench as the bridge in the story 'The Three Goats', giving opportunities for balancing and climbing as the story was dramatised. The quality of teaching is very good and teachers plan good activities to extend the children's skills.
55. The outside area has been developed very well to stimulate children to move and play. Large toys such as bikes and scooters are used when the weather permits. In the classroom, very good opportunities are provided for children to use construction kits, make models and use equipment such as scissors, paintbrushes and pencils.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision is made for interesting role-play in which children participate well.
- There are good opportunities to use a range of materials.

Commentary

56. The quality of teaching is good and teachers' organisation of role playing areas enhances learning. At present the "Castle Café" in the nursery is the focus for role play, where a good range of resources provides exciting play experiences. Other areas recently used have been a hospital and an animal hospital. Such imaginative situations stimulate children to talk and play well together, forming good links with literacy and social development. As a result they achieve well and are on line to meet the expected goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception class.
57. Children paint individual pictures, and contribute to class pictures such as 'Feed the birds in wintertime', and 'Fish' in the nursery. In the reception class children have talked about other faiths and made Hanukkah lights. Links with literacy can be seen

from a class picture in the nursery of the story, 'The Three Bears'. A craft exhibition was staged where children displayed vegetable sculptures, and children have cooked pancakes. These experiences enrich this area of learning and are combined with attractive displays of work which surround the children, celebrating their success.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average and have been maintained since the last inspection.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are being raised by an effective and well planned programme.
- Teaching and learning are good and as a result pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- The subject is monitored well and pupils' performance data is effectively analysed and used to raise standards.

Commentary

58. Standards in reading are above average throughout the school. Standards in speaking and listening are average, but this is good achievement over time as many of the pupils have a low starting point when they enter the school. This improvement in speaking and listening skills is the result of the planned strategies that are used consistently in all classes. Current standards in writing are average at both Year 2 and Year 6. Over time, standards in the national tests for writing have been above and well above average in Year 2; the difference this year is related to the ability of the current year group, rather than any issues concerning teaching and learning. English standards, as measured by national tests at Year 6, have fluctuated, ranging from above average to well below average. A concerted effort last year to improve the quality of pupils' writing, especially that of boys, was effective and has resulted in more pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in the national tests. There has been satisfactory improvement in the provision for English since the previous inspection.
59. Reading is systematically taught throughout the school with a good stock of books which is readily available in classrooms. By Year 6, most pupils read confidently and can discuss characters and plots, making predictions about how a book will develop. Most pupils have sufficient research skills but are unable to use these to the full as the school's library is not yet completed. However, this is scheduled to be done in the near future. Home-school reading logs are well used to encourage parents to support their children's reading, especially for younger pupils.
60. The presentation of pupils' written work is satisfactory. Pupils are well managed and generally know how to use dictionaries in their writing. The recently introduced marking policy helps pupils because teachers are increasingly providing positive comments which encourage pupils to improve the quality of their writing. However, this policy is not so evident in written work in other subjects, where comments are supportive but do not provide sufficient detail on how to improve. Pupils with special educational needs

are well supported during literacy lessons by very able support assistants, and as a result they achieve well.

61. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, sharing learning objectives with the class, and maintaining a good dialogue with support assistants, who make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils respond well both when listening to their teachers and when working collaboratively in pairs and groups. Teachers use effective strategies to develop joint working in speaking and listening, an example being the use of 'discussion partners', which is encouraged in all subjects. This way of working helps pupils to think about their work and to develop confidence when reporting back to the class. Overall, this good teaching results in good learning for the pupils. Good assessment procedures are in place and pupils are beginning to self-assess using thumb signs to indicate how well they think they have done. Appropriate and achievable targets are displayed in pupils' books and are reviewed regularly.
62. The co-ordinator's leadership and management are good, given that she has been in post just one term. Staff training has taken place with writing as a focus, and assessment procedures have been well developed. Data about pupils' performance, both from testing and from the work they produce, is carefully analysed so that areas for improvement can be targeted. The good standards in reading have been maintained since the last inspection and teachers have monitored pupils' work against national criteria. This information has been used effectively to set individual targets in classes. Although strategies to improve writing have been slow to have an effect, they have had a positive impact on pupils' progress, especially that of boys. For example, a boy in a good Year 6 lesson commented: 'I like writing stories. You can choose what to write.'

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. There is evidence of a cross-curricular approach which effectively links writing with other subjects. In a good Year 2 lesson on descriptive sentences, connections were made with both art and design and history. In a very good Year 5 lesson on fables ICT was well used, especially for pupils with special educational needs, and in a good Year 6 lesson music set the scene for pupils to write prose while listening to lyrics from 'Cats'. There are also some missed opportunities, for example in science, where too much of the writing is copied rather than pupils being encouraged to record their findings independently. The planned provision for encouraging pupils' speaking and listening skills has helped pupils to achieve well in this area. For example, Year 3 pupils in an art and design lesson used 'literacy partners' in their discussion time.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 have been limited by insufficient expectations of what higher attaining pupils can achieve.
- Pupils are generally skilled and confident in their number work.
- Assessment procedures are good but teachers are not yet using the information gained to set specific targets for pupils.

- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to help pupils who have special educational needs.

Commentary

64. Currently, standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6. In other years, younger pupils have generally reached above average standards. This was the case in 2004, when higher attaining pupils did particularly well. Standards for older pupils have been subject to greater fluctuation, but overall they reach average standards. Results in the Year 6 national tests in 2004 were not as good as the school had hoped, mainly because fewer pupils than expected attained the higher Level 5. This is because the school has not been providing consistent challenge for the higher attaining pupils through Years 3 to 6. However, test results have been carefully analysed and the school has introduced setting by ability in mathematics lessons, which is now having a positive effect for pupils of all abilities, and most pupils are achieving well. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.
65. Teachers provide a strong focus on numeracy skills and this leads to pupils handling numbers confidently. Pupils in Year 2 add and subtract tens and units confidently and a significant number work in hundreds. Pupils in Year 6 know their multiplication tables very well, although they have more difficulty in applying their knowledge. For example, in a lesson seen the higher attaining pupils were confused when asked to calculate the cost of tiling complex floor areas. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows steady progress in learning methods of calculation but few opportunities for investigation in mathematics. This limits progress, especially for higher attaining pupils, who need to be set problems and challenged to work them out for themselves.
66. Teaching in the numeracy aspects of mathematics is good, both in lessons seen and from the scrutiny of pupils' work. The insistence on very high standards of behaviour leads to pupils working in a quiet, business-like atmosphere. They receive a good level of encouragement and as a result pupils apply themselves well. Most lessons seen were good. In one satisfactory lesson, the pace of learning slowed because some pupils found the work set too difficult, yet they still applied themselves and tried their best. The major strength of a very good lesson was the very fast pace of teaching and learning. This was the result of the teacher's confident and enthusiastic approach and the setting of work that was well matched to pupils' needs for learning about subtraction in columns.
67. Teachers make the best use of the computers available for pupils to practise their mathematical skills. However, because the school does not yet have sufficient computers that can be used by a class group this is not an integral part of lessons, and pupils have only limited opportunities for 'hands-on' sessions. In the classes with interactive whiteboards these are used well to teach new concepts in an exciting way and to check on pupils' understanding.
68. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and make lessons interesting and enjoyable. As a result, pupils have very good attitudes and are keen to join in discussions. The talents of teaching assistants are used very effectively and they offer dedicated support to pupils. This is particularly beneficial for those pupils who have special educational needs, who as a result achieve well and make good progress.
69. Good systems for assessment are in place. Teachers use the information they have about pupils' progress to set work to match their needs in lessons. In Years 3 to 6 assessment is used to set pupils by ability, which is effective in supporting the learning

of most groups. A greater proportion of pupils reach average standards than in most schools, but the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels by Year 6 remains similar to most schools. The school is not providing sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. In particular, the published schemes used by teachers limit the demands on these pupils. Pupils are aware of the new learning taught in each lesson, but there is as yet no target setting for individual pupils so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve over time.

70. Leadership and management are sound with good potential. The co-ordinator is new to her post but is already making her mark on moving the school forward. From an analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses she is aware of areas in need of development and has taken steps to improve standards. As yet, however, she has not had time made available to check on their effectiveness by observing teaching and learning in lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

71. Teachers make satisfactory links with other subjects. For instance, pupils use graphs and data in science and ICT. However, there is no specific planning to promote a systematic approach.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Science is well taught and pupils achieved well in the lessons seen.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to science.
- Good assessment procedures are not yet impacting on standards.
- Good practice exists but is not used consistently through the school.
- There are missed opportunities to develop writing skills through scientific recording.

Commentary

72. Standards in science are currently average at both Year 2 and Year 6. Last year's teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 indicated an average percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2, but a well above average percentage at the higher Level 3. The work of the present Year 3 pupils supports these findings. Results in national tests at Year 6 have ranged from below to well above average. Last year, while an average percentage attained the higher Level 5, results at Level 4 were below average. Both higher and lower attaining pupils in the present Year 6 are working at an appropriate level, and target setting indicates average standards for both Level 4 and 5. However, the current quality of teaching is raising standards across the school, and pupils are achieving well and very well in their lessons. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.
73. Teaching in science is good overall, based on both the lessons seen and on the work in pupils' books. The teaching during the inspection was impressive, with one good and three very good lessons taking place. Effective teaching is made easier by the very good relationships between teachers and pupils, which ensure a very good atmosphere for learning. The very good lessons were characterised by very good

planning, which provided a structure that was both supportive and challenging. As a result, pupils were very well engaged and encouraged to think scientifically. Activities were both practical and truly investigative, with pupils discussing their findings and sharing ideas. Discussion with pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 showed their enthusiasm for science, with sound basic knowledge gained through experience and an understanding of the principles of fair testing. When talking about the work they have carried out recently, the response from pupils in all year groups indicates that currently they are achieving well.

74. Work in pupils' books is average overall, with some positive factors. Pupils in Year 1 have a very well organised folder which builds an effective picture of their achievement. Good marking in Year 2 includes some annotation to show how pupils approached the tasks. Year 3 pupils have a specific format which structures their experiments and ensures they include aspects such as prediction, fair testing and conclusions: however, this is not replicated and extended as pupils move through the school so that good practice is built on. In Year 4 a good range of investigations includes opportunities for pupils to devise their own ideas for setting up tests and recording their findings.
75. There are some missed opportunities to encourage pupils to develop their writing skills. There are examples of older pupils copying information down, rather than putting it into their own words. This sometimes includes the results of investigations, as well as factual information. Given pupils' positive attitudes to the subject, expectations of what older higher attaining pupils in particular can achieve have not always been as high as they might. Newly introduced systems for assessment will make it easier for teachers to track the progress pupils are making and to plan appropriate interventions.
76. The co-ordinator has only been in post since September 2004, but has made a very good start, showing both hard work and enthusiasm. She has devised an action plan which addresses the main issues for the subject and is building a good picture of the quality of teaching and learning. A new assessment format is in place which should provide good information about individual attainment and progress from year to year, making it easier to ensure that higher attaining pupils in particular reach the standards of which they are capable.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not have sufficient use of ICT to enrich their learning.
- Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory because their organisation impacts on the standards attained.
- Good use is made of interactive whiteboards for teaching and learning.

Commentary

77. Pupils reach average standards by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in the current Year 2 class show an appropriate range of ICT skills. They use computers purposefully, amending and saving their work and have some awareness of the way computers are used outside school. The Year 6 pupils have moved beyond this stage but are not

consistently making links between what they are learning and how their work might be usefully applied. They use email and recognise it as a good and efficient way to send messages. However, in Year 3, pupils are learning to open and read email in preparation for sending messages to American pen pals, work which has a practical application. Year 5 pupils have a wide range of experience. They collect information and interpret their findings, for example working with temperature charts. They create documents such as a calendar using graphics and different font styles and are eager to demonstrate the use of the new interactive whiteboards.

78. Most of the Year 6 pupils have sound technical skills but the lack of resources limits their opportunities to apply them. Despite this, their overall understanding of ICT is satisfactory, as is their achievement over time.
79. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some very good teaching being seen in Year 1. Here resources were very well chosen to find how key pieces of information describe objects. Pupils were able to 'paint' images on the screen and label them, using the large whiteboard to demonstrate to the class with confidence. The teacher and classroom assistant used the opportunity very well to practise other skills, for example the use of the digital camera to photograph fruits. The larger classes further up the school present a challenge to teachers as pupils have limited access to computers. Future developments already planned for will give the school the opportunity to address this issue.
80. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject, but the effectiveness of her leadership is impaired by the way resources are spread throughout the school. In the circumstances she gives her colleagues good support. A system of assessment for pupils has been developed and their work is monitored regularly. Teachers are confident in their knowledge, as are support staff, in response to the effective training they have received. A computer club is available for older pupils, giving opportunities to develop their word processing skills and to make charts and graphs. It is well attended by both girls and boys. Attainment has improved since the last inspection and improvement overall is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. Computers are in the classrooms but are not always used during lessons. They are not used daily in all classrooms throughout the school to develop work across the curriculum. Despite this, the school has an average number of computers when compared with schools nationally. The situation does not affect the development of ICT skills, but it fails to emphasise the importance of ICT in the world in which we live. Examples of ICT being used in other curriculum areas include art and design, English, mathematics and science. Teachers' weekly planning includes a section in which to consider the use of ICT across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

History was inspected in detail and is reported in full below. Geography was sampled. Insufficient teaching could be seen to form an overall judgement on the provision for religious education.

82. The coordinator for **religious education** has taken effective measures to correct weaknesses reported in the last inspection. There is now a suitable system in place to assess pupils' progress. A new scheme of work ensures pupils learn progressively

year on year, combining factual learning with opportunities to reflect on spiritual values. Resources of both books and artefacts are at a satisfactory level for all religions covered. A strength of provision is the school's close links with local churches and ministers.

83. In **geography** the coordinator continues to place emphasis on the teaching of skills and not simply facts. Pupils get lots of opportunities to develop these skills in fieldwork and good use is made of the local environment. In a good lesson seen in Year 5, pupils considered how changes in a major coalfield affected people's lives, and were able to link this to Dearham's mining history. Older pupils get the opportunity to broaden their horizons through visits to London and France. There is now a suitable system in place for assessing pupils' progress.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning is enriched by a wide variety of visits.
- There is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' historical investigation skills.

Commentary

84. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of some of the main events, people and changes in the periods of history they have studied. Their achievement and progress are satisfactory.
85. Teaching is satisfactory, but there are some weaknesses. In particular, not enough emphasis is placed on teaching skills. As a result, pupils are not suitably aware of how the past has been represented and interpreted in different ways. Opportunities to learn from research are limited. Consequently, pupils do not satisfactorily select and combine information from different sources. This was apparent in an otherwise good lesson, where a lively question and answer session showed that pupils had good knowledge of how children lived in Tudor times. The teacher's enthusiasm produced a very keen response to the task of researching from books and the internet to make comparisons between the lives of boys and girls and the rich and poor. Pupils' lack of understanding of how to research was clear, but with the teacher's good encouragement they persevered and achieved satisfactorily.
86. Leadership and management are sound. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made in provision. A suitable system is now in place for assessing pupils' progress and resources are satisfactory. A strength of provision is the wide variety of opportunities teachers provide for pupils to visit places of interest. They make particularly good use of the immediate locality, for instance through informative 'village walks'. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education was inspected in full and is reported in detail below. Art and design, design and technology and music were sampled.

87. In a good lesson in Year 3 in art and design, literacy partners were used effectively to promote collaborative work. The teacher made good use of the interactive whiteboard, displaying images which led to discussion and understanding. In their work, pupils were encouraged to use a good range of different media.
88. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have an appropriate variety of creative experiences. By Year 2 pupils have made pictures of seasonal trees, experimented with colour when painting fire pictures and studied the work of Van Gogh. Pupils in Year 6 have experienced a suitable variety of media. They have studied work of famous artists, such as Monet in Year 3, and the standard of painting shows a good use of colour and form. Pupils throughout the school have used a wide range of materials, although opportunities to make personal choices are limited. Three-dimensional work is supported by an after-school pottery club in Years 3 to 6.
89. Displays of pupils' work in classrooms are well presented. Systems are in place to monitor and evaluate standards but these have not had long enough to impact on

achievement throughout the school. However, the co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject.

90. In **design and technology**, work was studied and discussed with pupils. The subject was also discussed with the co-ordinator and schemes of work were examined. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good plans and sketches of what they want to make. A puppet club has been developed by the co-ordinator for younger pupils, which involves them in the manufacturing process. They are encouraged to find materials, work independently and evaluate the end result.
91. Pupils in Year 6 have made a variety of products. They plan in a sketch book, as they did when they designed hats which were attractively displayed in the classroom. Evaluation is an area for development, so that pupils have more opportunity to reflect on what can be changed and why. The subject is being led and managed well.
92. **Music** throughout the school is mainly taken by a specialist teacher, which ensures continuity and progression. There is now a better selection of tuned percussion instruments, and there are plans in place to increase the use of these in the classroom. Discussion with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 indicates they have an appropriate range of musical experiences and satisfactory knowledge and understanding. The school choir is well supported by both boys and girls who sing with good pitch and phrasing. Singing in the school assemblies is of a high standard and everyone participates. As well as the choir, pupils who are interested are able to study both the recorder and the guitar.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in dance are above average.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to take part in a variety of sports and games.
- The school has achieved the national 'Activemark' award.
- There are good links with the high school which support pupils' achievement.
- The subject is well led.

Commentary

93. Through strong leadership and personal commitment the school has achieved a national award for the support of pupils' physical activity. A wide range of sports and games are available to pupils, especially considering the relative size of the school. There is a good take-up by both boys and girls. Competitive sports are encouraged and pupils achieve well. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, in that standards in dance at least have risen, and there are now assessment procedures in place to judge pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
94. Teaching was either satisfactory or very good in the lessons seen, and is good overall. Teachers paid good attention to both warm-ups and cool-downs, and the pupils' response shows that this is expected practice. Pupils enjoy physical education and take part in lessons enthusiastically. They work well in pairs and most are able to

review and improve their performance with encouragement. Standards seen in gymnastics were average. In dance they were above average; the co-ordinator has close links with the local high school, and specialist staff have come in to support this area of the curriculum. The great majority of pupils attain the expected 25 metres in swimming: in some years every leaver has achieved this. Achievement is satisfactory overall, and good in dance.

95. The subject co-ordinator leads the subject well. She is pro-active and is part of the school sports co-ordinator national programme. High school links are good, and include Saturday workshops for pupils identified as being gifted and talented in a physical area. The school is also part of a national trial which includes a professional development programme that all staff can access. The one weakness is in management, where the co-ordinator has no insight into budget allocations and the subject's present and future funding.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weakness

- Teaching is good in this area of the curriculum and pupils attain above average standards.
- Lessons in personal, social and health education are provided on a regular basis.
- The attitudes and values in this area permeate everything the school does.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

96. Pupils reach above average standards and achieve well at both Year 2 and Year 6. The lessons in this area of the curriculum are closely related to the school's expectations and ethos, and are therefore fundamental to the school's approach, rather than being just another addition to the curriculum. Personal and social education is part of the way in which pupils treat each other, and the way they talk to adults. The theory they learn is applied to their lives in school, and is taught through expectations as well as lessons. It is not possible to judge improvement, as this area was not reported on separately in the previous inspection.
97. Teaching was good in both lessons seen. Pupils were encouraged to think about aspects of responsibility relevant to their own lives. Discussions were well led with relevant questions which encouraged pupils to respond with good examples. Good use was made of discussion partners, and there was a good balance between talk and written recording.
98. Leadership and management are good, and well supported by a whole-school commitment. The co-ordinator has undertaken specialised training and encourages staff to try out new ideas and report on their effectiveness. The use of a specific scheme throughout the school ensures continuity and development, but does not preclude fresh ideas and initiatives.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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