

INSPECTION REPORT

LAUREL AVENUE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114140

Headteacher: Mrs V Vayro

Lead inspector: Dr J N Thorp

Dates of inspection: 14th – 16th February 2005

Inspection number: 267191

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:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	98
School address:	Laurel Avenue Sherburn Road Estate Durham County Durham
Postcode:	DH1 2EY
Telephone number:	0191 386 8416
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Elliott
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Laurel Avenue Community Primary School is located on the Sherburn Road Estate, about a mile to the east of the centre of Durham. The school is smaller than average in size. At the time of the inspection there were 79 pupils in Years 1 to 6 and 37 children attending full-time or part-time in the nursery and reception classes. Most children come from the surrounding area. There is significant mobility of pupils, however. The area around the school displays the characteristics of significant socio-economic disadvantage, with around 51 per cent of children entitled to a free school meal, which is higher than that found in other schools. Attainment on entry is generally well below average. There are 32 pupils (33 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs, which is higher than in most schools nationally. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is also above average. There are currently no pupils whose home language is not English.

The school has experienced a very unsettled time recently with prolonged staff absences, including the headteacher, requiring temporary teachers to cover classes. The situation is now much more stable with all full-time staff returned to their posts. The school is involved in the Family Learning initiative and other community provision includes various activities in the Community Centre located in the school building. The school was awarded Investor in Children status in 2002, won a Schools Achievement Award and a Healthy School award in

2002 and achieved the Activemark in 2004. The school was awarded the Anti-bullying kite mark accreditation in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6327	Dr J N Thorp	Lead inspector	Mathematics; Science; Music; Physical education
11358	Mrs V Lamb	Lay inspector	
30810	Mrs E Kounnou	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Religious education; Art and design; Design and technology; Special educational needs
19120	Mr D Pattinson	Team inspector	English; Information and communication technology; History; Geography; Personal, social and health education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall the school **provides a satisfactory quality of education**. Teaching is good; it is very good in the nursery and reception classes, but the curriculum is unbalanced with too little time for teaching and learning in some subjects. Although standards are below average by the end of Year 6, good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes enable them to make good progress from a very low starting point, ensuring their achievement is good. The headteacher leads the school satisfactorily. The school is well managed and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are below average by the end of Year 6
- Overall teaching is good and in the nursery and reception classes it is very good
- Pupils make good progress from a low starting point and achieve well
- Teachers manage behaviour very well, so classrooms are calm and pupils can learn
- Although the curriculum is unbalanced, with insufficient time for teaching and learning in some subjects, a very good range of opportunities is taken to enrich it
- Rigorous procedures for assessment enable teachers to track pupils' progress effectively and to set targets for further improvement
- There has been insufficient progress in building effective partnerships with parents
- Attendance levels are very low and this limits the progress some pupils can make

There has been satisfactory improvement overall since the previous inspection in June 1999. There has been significant improvement in provision for children in the Foundation Stage and this is now very good. Overall provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved, although pupils are not yet taught the full curriculum. Governance has improved and the identified health and safety issue has been addressed. Teaching is also better. However, there has been too little improvement in standards, which are very similar to those reported in the previous inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E – in the lowest 5% nationally. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Care needs to be exercised in interpreting the results of statutory assessment in the table above because there are such small numbers of pupils taking the tests each year. A number of other factors also need to be taken into account, such as the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups and the high rates of mobility and of absence. All these contributed to the poor results at the end of Year 6 last year. These poor results also mask the fact that overall **achievement is good**. Children settle

quickly in the Foundation Stage and the very good teaching helps them to achieve very well. Although teaching is effective in enabling children to make good progress, it cannot fully compensate for the very low starting point of most children when they begin school and many are unlikely to reach the goals expected nationally by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and they achieve well, with standards rising steadily at this stage. Although currently there is a very wide spread amongst pupils in Year 2, standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of good teaching, pupils currently working towards the end of Year 6 are doing better, achieving well even though standards remain below average in English, mathematics and science. Although there has been good improvement in provision since the previous inspection, standards in ICT are still below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 2 pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good teaching and support they receive; by the end of Year 6 their achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Good relationships and the effective support provided by all the adults ensure that pupils feel happy, valued and secure at the school, which contributes to their positive attitudes. The behaviour of most pupils is good. Attendance, however, is very low.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is good overall, and particularly effective in the nursery and reception classes. This contributes positively to pupils' good learning. Assessment procedures are good, enabling teachers to track pupils' progress and set targets for further learning. Pupils are well cared for and good provision is made for their personal development. The curriculum not sufficiently well balanced, but it is enriched with a good range of activities and visits. A closer partnership with parents is needed to help them support their children's education more effectively.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. Although there is a strong focus on raising standards, leadership of the curriculum has been neglected. Overall management is good, ensuring the school runs smoothly. Other key staff lead and manage English, mathematics and science well, but as yet are not monitoring and supporting the development of teaching and learning. Governance has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory; the governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

While most parents are pleased with the progress their children are making, value the range of activities provided and believe that teaching is good, a significant minority of parents expressed concern about their relationships with the school and their perceived lack of opportunities to express their views. Some parents do not feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns. Most pupils have positive views about school; they enjoy coming to school, are happy and feel secure.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT
- Provide a more balanced curriculum, with sufficient time for teaching and learning in all subjects
- Build effective partnerships with parents so they are enabled to support their children's learning
- Improve attendance

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall pupils' achievement is good. Standards on entry to the school are low, however, and there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Very good provision ensures achievement is very good for children in the Foundation Stage, even though fewer than expected of them attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. Achievement is good in Years 1 to 6, because pupils' learning is good, even though standards in English, mathematics and science remain below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards on entry are low, but very good provision enables children to achieve very well in the Foundation Stage
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6 from a low starting point and their achievement is good
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average throughout the school; standards of literacy and numeracy are not high enough
- Pupils make good progress in most aspects of ICT but they have too few opportunities to develop their skills in control technology
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in Years 1 and 2, because support is focused and well matched to their needs

Commentary

1. Children enter the school with fairly wide-ranging levels of attainment, but overall standards are low. This is very similar to that found in the previous inspection. Initial assessment indicates that standards are particularly low in relation to children's personal, social and emotional development and their ability to communicate and use language. Nevertheless the very good provision made for these children in the nursery and reception classes and very good teaching ensure they make a good start to their time in school. They achieve very well, even though many of them are not on course to achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. There is a very strong emphasis on communication, language and literacy and on personal, social and emotional development and children make particularly good progress in these areas of learning. In other areas, the restricted language development of a significant proportion of the children inhibits their learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.1 (14.7)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.6 (13.4)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.5 (14.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. This table shows that standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were broadly average in reading and writing and mathematics, compared with pupils in other

schools. These results show a substantial improvement from the previous year. There appear to be significant fluctuations in standards from one year to the next. However, care needs to be exercised in interpreting this data because there are so few pupils taking the tests each year and because there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. Results over the last three years suggest improvement that is at least as good as in most schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.5 (24.2)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	24.0 (25.6)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	25.5 (27.0)	28.6 (28.6)

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

3. This table indicates that overall standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were well below average in English, mathematics and science. In mathematics and science they were among the lowest five per cent when compared nationally. In all three subjects results were not as good as they had been the previous year. Again this is because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in such a small year group taking the test, along with a high rate of mobility and poor attendance.
4. By the end of Year 2 standards in English are below those expected; by the end of Year 6 they are well below average. There is good support for the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and as a result they achieve well. Many pupils enter the school with poor communication skills. There is a clear emphasis on improving pupils' speaking and listening skills. Although many pupils make good progress, standards remain below average. There is a similar emphasis on improving reading. Teaching is good and at times pupils receive good support from classroom assistants which enables them to undertake tasks set in lessons. Standards of writing are weak throughout the school, with pupils given too few opportunities to draft and re-draft their work and so they are not shown how to improve what they have written.
5. Pupils achieve well in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, their learning is good and they make good progress, even though most do not reach expected standards. Since they start from such a low base, this nevertheless represents good achievement. Pupils continue to make progress through Years 3 to 6 and their achievement is good. Throughout the school there is an emphasis on number and extending pupils' skills of calculation. Consequently pupils do better in this area of work. In other areas of mathematics, however, pupils have too few opportunities to extend their skills, particularly in solving problems and data handling.
6. Standards in science are below average by the end of Year 2, because they are low on entry and pupils have not been able to make sufficient gains to reach expected levels. Despite this, learning is good and they make good progress, so achievement is good. They continue to make progress in most aspects of science through Years 3 to 6, but they have too few opportunities to develop their skills of scientific investigation and by the end of Year 6 standards are below average.
7. Pupils' learning and achievement in ICT are satisfactory. Pupils make appropriate progress through Years 1 to 6 because they now have more opportunities to work with the computers than they did at the time of the previous inspection. However, these opportunities are not yet extensive enough and this is limiting the rate at which pupils

can make progress. While there have been good improvements in the way some aspects of the ICT curriculum are taught, pupils still have too few opportunities to develop their understanding of control technology. Computers are not used effectively to teach pupils how to draft and re-draft their writing.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. This is because the effectiveness of support for them varies. The quality of pupils' individual education plans is good and where these are used effectively, as in Years 1 and 2, this enables teachers to provide work which is clearly matched to their learning needs and classroom assistants provide focused additional support. These pupils achieve well. At times in Years 3 to 6 activities and tasks are not well matched to individual pupils' needs and, despite the good support of classroom assistants in Years 5 and 6, this inhibits the rate at which they make progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **poor** although punctuality is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very low when compared to other schools but is improving year on year
- Pupils show positive attitudes to their work and other activities; their personal development is good
- The school has high expectations of pupils' conduct, with good procedures to encourage and support pupils' good behaviour
- Behaviour in lessons is particularly good because pupils respond well to the school's positive approach

Commentary

9. Attendance has improved significantly over the last few years. The good systems that the school has developed to monitor attendance and show pupils and their parents how important it is to come to school whenever possible are beginning to show a good effect. In particular, parents are now supporting the school well by notifying staff immediately when their child is absent so that staff know that children are safe and are able to give the child an authorised absence if this is appropriate

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.9	School data	0.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

10. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and other activities because staff encourage and motivate them. Pupils show an interest and try hard when they find work particularly challenging, which contributes effectively to their good all round personal

development. Pupils join in discussions animatedly and enjoy sharing their good work with others. They respect the nature of assemblies and are particularly interested and keen in improving their own and others' experiences. They share good ideas about what they would like in the playground, for instance, and work hard to raise funds for several charities each year. They enjoy taking part in the good range of clubs that are provided for them at lunchtime and after school. Overall pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

11. The school expects pupils to behave well and has good procedures in place to encourage and support them in doing so. Teachers and other staff get to know pupils well and their pupils want to please them. The way that staff, pupils and a group of parents worked together so effectively to produce a new behaviour policy was good, and this has now been shared with all parents. Not only has this helped everyone understand what is needed for good learning to take place, it has also contributed most positively to pupils' personal development. A code of conduct has been produced that is based on developing mutual respect between adults and pupils, helping pupils to get along well together and giving constructive guidance to those who find it harder than usual to behave well. Many new ideas have been shared about how to make playtimes a happy time and pupils are very well involved in the practical side of activities in the playground.
12. As a result of the school's positive approach, behaviour around school is good overall. Children in nursery are happy and confident as they are given a very good level of care and support. Pupils behave well in lessons by listening to their teachers and each other and taking turns when speaking and using equipment. They move around school quietly and calmly and play well together during breaks, sometimes in large groups that demonstrate good teamwork. Pupils feel that bullying is not a big problem but have mixed views about how to deal with it. The school is a 'telling school' and many pupils feel encouraged to do this, but some pupils believe that informing on bullies incites further trouble. However, they feel confident that the work of the buddies, mediators and staff will overcome this as time goes on.

Exclusions

13. There was a high number of exclusions during last year. This was a time when a number of staff who know the pupils well were absent for a prolonged period, which resulted in a very small number of pupils becoming unsettled. By comparison, exclusions are greatly reduced this year because all the staff have now returned and the school is much more settled.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	86	15	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall. Teaching is good and lessons are productive, ensuring that pupils can learn. The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall, because it is insufficiently well balanced with not enough time for teaching and learning in some subjects. There are very good opportunities provided for pupils to learn outside of lessons. Pupils are well cared for. Most parents are pleased with the progress their children are making and think that teaching is good, but a significant minority expressed concerns about their relationship with the school and the lack of opportunities to express their views.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall; it is particularly effective in the Foundation Stage. This ensures that in most lessons pupils' learning and their achievement are good. There is a clear focus on learning and on raising standards, and this contributes positively to pupils' achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection, especially in the Foundation Stage, so it is now more consistent and good overall
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively
- There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' language skills, although at times too much teacher talk restricts opportunities for pupils to think for themselves
- There is a clear focus on learning; teachers plan effectively and use their classroom assistants well to support pupils as they work
- Although teachers use their interactive whiteboards effectively, they provide too few opportunities for pupils to work with the computers
- Assessment procedures are good, providing good information to support teachers' planning, but teachers provide insufficient guidance in their marking about how pupils can improve their work

Commentary

14. Teaching in the school is good overall; it is very good in the Foundation Stage. Throughout the school, teachers work very hard. They are particularly skilful in the way they manage their pupils' behaviour and they have a strong commitment both to pupils' personal development and to improving standards. Not only does this have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school, it also ensures that their learning is good. Overall teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Improvement has been particularly good in the Foundation Stage, in which there was a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in the previous inspection and teaching in this part of the school is now very good. Teaching is also better because the good and very good teaching is now more evenly distributed across the school. In more than eight out of ten lessons seen during this inspection teaching was good or better; more than half of all lessons were very good or excellent. There was one unsatisfactory lesson.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	12	6	2	1	0	0

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

15. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. There is a consistent approach throughout the school, which contributes to the success teachers have in ensuring their classrooms are calm and orderly so pupils are able to learn. Teachers respond very positively to their pupils and are clear in communicating what they expect. This contributes most positively to pupils' good behaviour. Teachers and classroom assistants are very good role models. Relationships between all the adults and pupils are very good.
16. There is a high proportion of pupils with underdeveloped language skills, many with identified special educational needs. Throughout the school there is a strong focus on helping pupils improve their ability to communicate effectively, particularly orally. Teachers are good at posing questions that encourage pupils to think and respond. They provide good opportunities for pupils to talk, sometimes with their talking partners, at other times in whole class discussions. There is an appropriate emphasis given to extending subject-specific vocabulary, in mathematics and science for example. Teachers use plenary discussions effectively to reinforce pupils' learning; good questioning and discussion enable them to assess pupils' understanding. In the best lessons, teachers provide plenty of time for pupils to consider their responses before they contribute, because they need this time to think out what they are going to say. At times, however, teachers tend to talk too much, which not only reduces the time available for pupils to work on the particular planned activities, it also means pupils are denied opportunities to think for themselves; sometimes teachers rush on the discussion too quickly which inhibits pupils' responses.
17. There is a firm focus on pupils' learning. Teachers plan effectively and manage their lessons purposefully and with good pace. They communicate the specific objectives for lessons clearly, which helps ensure that pupils are usually fully engaged in the various activities. As a result, pupils are kept focused on what teachers intend them to learn. Teachers are good at intervening in what pupils do with very good questions, which not only reinforce learning but also provide further challenge to move learning on. Teachers make good use of their skilful classroom assistants, who support pupils'

learning effectively and are good at ensuring all pupils are fully enabled to participate in their lessons. All this helps ensure that pupils' learning is good.

18. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards now installed in most classrooms. These help them bring lessons to life and are effective in engaging pupils' interest, although, at times, there are missed opportunities to use them more interactively. Generally, however, teachers make insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning; they provide too few opportunities for pupils to work with the computers in other subjects.
19. Overall assessment is good. There are good systems and procedures in place, which are managed effectively to ensure that assessment information provides teachers with a clear view of pupils' progress and helps them set appropriate targets for improvement. Detailed analysis of the results of assessment, particularly in English and mathematics, helps teachers plan specific tasks or learning activities to meet pupils' particular needs. Teachers respond positively to pupils' effort as they mark their work, usually clearly indicating what they have learned or understood. Generally, however, teachers provide insufficient guidance in their comments for pupils about what they could do to improve, develop or extend their work.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall because it is not well balanced. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. The quality of resources and accommodation is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes and for pupils in Year 1 helps them to make very good progress
- Very good opportunities for pupils to take part in exciting activities are regularly planned in many curriculum areas and these enrich their learning
- The accommodation is spacious and well kept, with many good quality displays, so that pupils know their work is valued
- The way the curriculum is planned means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills in some subjects

Commentary

20. The curriculum provided for children in the nursery and the mixed reception and Year 1 class is very good. This is because activities are planned at just the right levels. In both classes, children have a lot of fun. For example, in the nursery they thoroughly enjoy playing with an adult in 'The Three Bears House', setting out bowls of different sizes for the bears. Pupils in Year 1 benefit very well from a curriculum that is designed to help them learn as they play. Many are still learning at a level that is lower than expected for their age. The way that activities are planned helps them to make very good gains in their learning.
21. Throughout the school there are many opportunities for pupils to take part in interesting activities that bring the curriculum to life. Regular visitors to the school provide pupils with exciting experiences. For example, they learn to play African drums, and join in with Indian dances or a storyteller who tells them traditional tales from the Philippines. Good use is made of visits outside the school to broaden pupils' understanding. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made visits to Tynemouth and

Durham city centre to help them contrast local areas for geography. A good range of after-school and lunchtime clubs is offered for pupils in this small school, ranging from German to a drama club.

22. The accommodation for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is spacious and very well kept so that it provides a very good environment for pupils to learn in. Great care is taken to present pupils' work well, illustrated in the high quality of the mounting and display of some of the pupils' artwork for example, hung in the main corridors so that all can see them. Throughout the school, teachers display pupils' work well. From the nursery to Year 2, very good use is made of written language in the displays to help pupils learning basic literacy skills. Children in the reception class do not currently have access to a safe and secure outdoor area, and this limits the range of activities that are provided for them out of doors. Good organisation means that the teacher does her best to overcome this by planning playground activities for the whole class each week. However, the limitations of this arrangement mean that the very good curriculum provided for children indoors is not mirrored in an outdoor classroom.
23. From Year 2 to Year 6, subjects other than the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT are planned in blocks of time. The way that these are planned over each year means that in some classes pupils experience very long gaps between each topic. For example, pupils in Year 2 study two consecutive history units, and then two consecutive geography units. This does not help them to build on their skills in these subjects consistently as they move through the school. In addition the way that the timetable is organised means that there is very little time for non-core subjects each week. This is because the whole morning is used for English and mathematics, so that the rest of the curriculum has to be squeezed into the shorter afternoon. As a result, many of the non-core subjects are covered inadequately, and there are many missed opportunities for pupils to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. Some aspects of the ICT curriculum are not taught, for example control technology in Years 3 to 6, so that pupils are unable to reach the expected level.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. Support, advice and guidance based on monitoring of pupils' progress are **good**. The school values pupils' views and has developed **good** systems for seeking and acting upon them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall the school's concern for the care of pupils is good, but it is undermined when some parents drive beyond the designated safe area for pedestrians on entry to the school
- Relationships are very good
- Guidance and support initiatives, especially peer support, are good

Commentary

24. The school makes every effort to take good care of its pupils and promotes their health and welfare well. In general, appropriate procedures are in place for child protection, first aid and health and safety but there is a potential safety risk when some parents drive beyond the designated safe area. All of the health and safety issues identified in the previous report have been fully remedied.

25. Staff get to know pupils very well and pupils have an adult they trust to help them. The school works towards a balance between hard work, constructive play and care for all through the very good relationships that staff develop with pupils. In lessons, teachers and assistants make sure that pupils know what is expected of them and encourage them to succeed, praising them when they do. They also celebrate pupils' good work and effort by inviting their parents to special assemblies and displaying work prominently around the school for everyone to see. This helps children a lot by giving them the confidence and desire to have a go and to persevere when they find work difficult. These very good relationships are a firm foundation for helping children to behave well and develop good attitudes towards school as adults set good examples to children on how to work and behave well. Pupils respect their teachers and other adults, accepting their guidance and taking seriously their requests to reflect on any unacceptable behaviour. In this way pupils learn to take personal responsibility for their own behaviour in school from a very early age.
26. Good guidance and support are given in a wide variety of ways ranging from reviews of individual work and setting new targets to opportunities to learn how to become responsible citizens, for instance through charity fundraising. Staff encourage children to talk about their feelings and to respect and understand the feelings of others. Children of all ages have responsibilities for the smooth running of routines and special events so they learn how to contribute as useful members of the school community. The school has undertaken extensive anti-bullying work that has been officially commended and recognised in the award of the anti-bullying kite mark. As part of this, groups of pupils are trained as buddies and mediators and help others by organising playtime activities and acting as peacemakers in disputes. School and class councils provide a good means of seeking and acting on pupils' views about specific topics and how to make changes for the better in school. Pupils are given good guidance on how to improve their work during lessons and formal assessments and their homework diaries provide a useful means for their teachers and parents to share information to help them with their work and behaviour.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships with parents remain unsatisfactory. Links with other local schools and colleges, and with the local community, are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient progress has been made in building effective partnerships with parents since the previous inspection; communication between home and school is not as effective as it could be
- Opportunities are missed to enlist parental help in school, but good opportunities are provided to help parents develop an understanding of how to support their children's learning
- Parents are not consulted enough about how they view the school
- Productive links with the local secondary school help pupils transfer smoothly
- Good links are established with outside bodies that benefit pupils' learning and support their personal development

Commentary

27. The school has made insufficient progress in developing an effective partnership with parents since the previous inspection. Although the school provides both formal and

informal opportunities for parents to meet with teachers, and parents are able to make appointments to discuss any concerns or complaints they may have, some parents say that they do not find it easy to approach staff with concerns. Information provided for parents about the school is not always communicated clearly in 'parent friendly' language. Annual reports do not help them understand what their children can do and what they need to improve. The school's prospectus does not contain all of the information that parents are entitled to receive.

28. The school appreciates parents' help. A few parents help by making resources, and a very small number help in classrooms. Where this happens it works well, with teachers planning carefully to make the best of this extra support. Opportunities are missed to develop this valuable support among many more parents. The school organises a variety of workshops, in conjunction with external support agencies, which are well attended by a small core group of parents. These workshops make a good contribution to developing home-school partnerships, by supporting these parents in developing an understanding of how to help their children with their school work.
29. The school has sought parents' views on some new developments, for instance the new behaviour policy, and is looking forward to the results of a formal consultation about a major school and community development. However, in general parents' views about what the school provides are not routinely sought. Parents are invited to special events such as concerts, fundraising and celebration assemblies and generally give them good support. Parents were particularly supportive of one event organised to help them find out about anti-bullying initiatives, but some previously well-established links have not been sustained since the last inspection.
30. The school has established good links with other schools and the local college of further education. An especially productive partnership is enjoyed with the local secondary school to which the vast majority of pupils transfer. This enables pupils to get to know their future school and some of the staff during their last two years in primary school. A good range of activities has been organised, including trips out for science lessons, summer schools and visits from secondary school teachers and sixth form students who lead activities and lessons in several subjects.
31. The school is well involved in the local and wider community. Good links are established with the community centre that shares the premises that provide support for staff and pupils in school. The school has established many partnerships with outside agencies that enable it to provide a wide range of clubs for pupils and specialist support for individuals and groups in school, and to enable parents to support their children's learning. Good use is made of trips out of school and visitors are welcomed in to broaden pupils' horizons. In return, pupils give willingly of their time to entertain and raise funds for members of the local community and as part of national fundraising events.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership overall. The management of the school is good. Leadership by other key staff is effective. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is a caring, experienced leader with high aspirations for the school, but the lack of accurate conclusions drawn from school self-evaluation has impeded their realisation in some important areas
- Subject leaders are increasingly effective at identifying what works well, but they are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating and supporting the development of teaching
- The school's strategic planning is rigorous, reflecting the school's aims and values, and is sharply focused on the need to continue to raise standards
- Rigorous analysis of the results of assessment enables senior managers to allocate additional support to those pupils who need it and set targets for improvement
- The governing body is much more involved in checking aspects of the school's work than at the time of the last inspection, but is not yet fully effective in helping shape the future direction of the school

Commentary

32. The headteacher provides caring and purposeful leadership, which is effective in many areas because of her clear vision, commitment and effective delegation. She has ensured there is a firm focus on raising standards, securing the commitment of all staff and pupils to this end, and has initiated strategies and approaches to make this happen. All staff and governors have been fully consulted to determine the school's priorities for development to ensure that they are all fully involved in identifying what the school needs to do to improve. However, the headteacher is not yet good enough at drawing accurate conclusions from available evidence to support school self-evaluation and enable her to determine the most important issues to help raise standards. Leadership of the curriculum has been neglected, for example, and as a result, there is no rolling programme of policy review, which has left some non-core subjects, such as geography, insecure. The need for good relationships with parents is not given enough emphasis to help establish a true partnership between home and school. On balance, because of these weaknesses, her leadership is judged as satisfactory and not good.
33. The most important function of senior managers is to secure the best possible quality of education for all pupils in order to raise standards. The able senior management team is being empowered through training and support to lead the implementation of essential improvements. As a result, it is becoming increasingly effective at identifying what works well and what needs doing. However, subject leaders at present have little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in lessons or pupils' work and this impairs their effectiveness.
34. School improvement planning provides a useful tool for development, with a clear, measurable agenda for improving achievement, teaching and learning. It is used well to determine the best use of funds available to the school to support the priorities for school improvement. It is closely linked to the planned provision of training of teachers and support staff, and the performance management arrangements, which are embedded in the school's work. Improvement planning builds rigorously on a thorough audit of outcomes from the previous year's planning to ensure that developments are sustained to help raise standards.
35. Outcomes of national tests are rigorously analysed to help identify and overcome weaknesses in pupils' performance. For example, data analysis is used effectively to identify groups of pupils for additional support to enable teachers to match work precisely to their needs to help them improve more quickly. Data analysis has been used very effectively to establish individual and group targets in English and

mathematics. Pupils are increasingly involved in discussing their own targets as a means of helping to drive up standards. The tracking of achievement of individual pupils is rapidly becoming embedded in the school's work to give them the best possible opportunities to succeed.

36. The committed governing body, well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic chair, provides sound support for the headteacher and carries out its statutory duties appropriately. All committees are properly structured and have clear terms of reference to ensure that they effectively support the school. Governors are knowledgeable about some of the school's strengths and some areas where it needs to improve. They increasingly take a keen and active interest through links with specific subjects and classes, although some initiatives are embryonic. The governing body increasingly challenges the headteacher and senior management team, in discussions about school development planning, for example. Its involvement as a 'critical friend' of the school is much greater than at the time of the last inspection. However, it is not yet rigorous enough in checking aspects of the school's work, such as in the important area of curriculum development, and in holding the school to account for what it achieves. As a result, although it is increasingly able to make well-informed choices from available evidence, it is not yet involved enough in shaping the school's future direction.
37. Regular monitoring of spending patterns helps ensure that finance is used to benefit pupils. Principles of best value are soundly applied and the governing body is committed to ensuring that all funds are wisely spent. The secretary works well to ensure that the school runs smoothly and that day-to-day financial management does not impinge on teaching and learning. Financial control is sound; auditors found no issues during the school's recent audit.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	500556
Total expenditure	479182
Expenditure per pupil	3483

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	32034
Balance carried forward to the next year	53408

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. There has been good overall improvement in provision since the previous inspection, particularly in the effectiveness with which children's skills of communication and the ability to use language are promoted. Very good leadership and management have ensured that the curriculum for children in both the reception and nursery classes is very good. This underpins the very good progress that children make in both classes. The curriculum is based on the national guidance and provides many fun activities for children to learn from. There is great consistency between the classes so that children make the transition from one to the other with ease. Teaching assistants provide very good support due to the very good partnerships that exist between them and the class teachers. This results in very strong teamwork that ensures children always have high quality support.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All adults are very good at encouraging children to behave well
- The very good range of activities provided means that children are interested in learning

Commentary

39. Most children's skills in this area are below those expected for their age. In the nursery many children find it difficult to play with other children. By the time they leave the reception class most will still not reach the goals expected for children at that age, but the majority have made very good progress. This is because they are taught very well. All adults are particularly consistent in the way they talk to the children to encourage them. They constantly praise them for their efforts and explain very well exactly what they would like them to do. As a result, children know what is expected of them so that they behave very well and mostly enjoy their learning. The range of activities provides many opportunities to have fun, so that children want to learn. They are confident to try out new things because many are enticing. All adults have very high expectations of the children in their care; as a result, they are developing independence very well. For example, most children in the reception class change their clothes capably for physical activities in the hall.

40. Children have plenty of opportunities to choose what they would like to do from a range of activities. In the reception class these are all labelled with big colourful shapes to show which experiences each group may choose from. This is because the teacher has carefully designed activities that children of all abilities will be able to do independently. In both the nursery and reception classes, adults target their work with small groups to help children increase their skills in all areas of learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very clear teaching of key skills helps children to achieve very well.
- Plenty of exciting activities are planned that help children develop language skills as they play

Commentary

41. The very good teaching and learning in this area enable children to make very good progress, although few will reach the goals expected at the end of the reception year. In the reception class lessons are characterised by rigorous planning and very clear communication with the children. The way that all adults explain very carefully to children exactly what is expected of them helps them to develop listening skills very well. Most children start school in the nursery with very low levels of spoken English. The lack of ability to communicate effectively limits their progress in many areas of learning. In the nursery some opportunities to encourage children to talk to one another are missed, because adults focus consistently on teaching children to put up their hand before they speak and this limits the number of opportunities to take part. In the reception class, children are often encouraged to talk together in small groups and then tell the class about their ideas and this greatly enhances the number of opportunities for children to talk to one another.
42. Encouraging children to enjoy reading and writing lies at the heart of successful teaching. Children have plenty of opportunities to read aloud together, often whilst making actions to match the book. In the reception class there is a very good focus on teaching early writing skills; showing children how to write letter shapes correctly has a high priority. Both classrooms are very well organised to enhance language development. Walls are covered with writing, both the children's and adults' as well as printed text. In the nursery many activities have examples of children's writing hanging from them. For example, children labelled the water tray 'drip drop'.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make very good progress because they are taught very well
- Many activities are provided that help children develop mathematical skills as they play together

Commentary

43. Most children will not reach the goals expected when they leave the reception class even though they are taught very well. They make very good progress in both classes because teachers plan activities that help them to build on their skills. Teachers regularly work with small groups of children to help them learn. For example in the nursery, the teacher talked to the children as they made tall towers with building blocks so that they learned the meaning of many mathematical words as they played together. In the reception class, children had great fun reading a book about puppets together that taught them how to put numbers in the right order. Very good attention to increasing children's mathematical vocabulary is a key feature of the very successful teaching in both classes.
44. There are plenty of mathematical activities for children to play with each day. In the reception class children enjoyed sorting out ten green bottles in the water tray, and putting a set of ducks in the right order. Clipboards that encourage children to write about their play before they move onto the next activity enhance all these experiences.

45. The following three areas of learning were sampled, **knowledge and understanding of the world**, **physical development** and **creative development**, as there was insufficient evidence to judge provision. However, there are a number of important strengths and children appear to be doing well in all areas.

46. The main characteristics of provision seen in **knowledge and understanding of the world** are:
- Very good use of digital photography means that children see pictures of themselves at work all around the classrooms
 - Children have plenty of opportunities to use computers to play games
 - Activity tables are covered with interesting things to promote curiosity, such as magnifying glasses to look at snails feeding in a damp aquarium.
47. The main characteristics of provision seen in **physical development** are:
- The outdoor area in the nursery is used well in all weathers to encourage children to develop physical skills
 - There are plenty of activities for children to develop control of small objects such as pencils and scissors
 - Children in the reception class enjoy showing each other how they have learned to jump around beanbags.
48. The main characteristics of provision seen in **creative development** are:
- Children have plenty of opportunities to act out stories together, such as when they play in 'The Chinese Restaurant' in the reception class, and 'The Three Bears' House' in the nursery
 - There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop creative skills through painting and using other materials to create pictures.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are below those expected at the end of Year 2 and well below by the end of Year 6, most pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities
- The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is rightly given an increasing emphasis, although sometimes opportunities are still missed to engage pupils in discussion, role-play and drama
- The good use of target setting is helping pupils understand what they have to do to improve their reading and writing
- Pupils write for an increasing range of purposes, but they are not often enough helped to improve the quality of their work by re-drafting, developing their skills using the computers for example
- Spelling and handwriting are not good enough and the presentation of most pupils' work requires attention
- Teaching is good overall, with teachers increasingly making it clear what pupils need to do to improve their work
- The subject is well led; there are rigorous plans for its further development
- Literacy skills are not promoted well enough through other subjects

Commentary

49. Inspection evidence indicates that speaking and listening, reading and writing are well below national levels by the time pupils leave school. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. However, pupils' achievements are good in relation to their very low attainment on entry, and to the linguistic and other barriers to learning that so many pupils must overcome before they can read, write and speak at expected levels. Most pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities, including those with special educational needs, because they are well taught and supported and have good attitudes to learning.
50. The school has rightly identified a need to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills to help raise standards further. As a result, planned opportunities for pupils to speak and listen in a wide range of contexts are increasing. For example, the extended use of 'talking partners' in other subjects is helping pupils to speak more confidently and clearly. However, other strategies for developing speaking skills are not used widely enough. For example, there are not enough opportunities for discussion, role-play situations and drama activities to increase the rate at which pupils are making progress and to help them become confident speakers more quickly.
51. Pupils have targets in reading and writing, which help them to reflect on their own learning and so overcome identified weaknesses more quickly. For example, most pupils know the level at which they are working and what they need to do next to improve. In reading, targets on key rings ensure that they know what they need to do next even when they are reading at home. This provides evidence of the high profile given to this aspect of the school's work through the implementation of different strategies to help pupils to read with fluency, accuracy and understanding. However, most pupils still read at levels well below those expected of pupils their age by the time they leave school. There is a well-stocked and spacious library, but it is not used effectively enough to enthuse pupils about reading or help them develop a love of books.
52. Pupils write for an increasingly wide range of purposes including letters, instructions, poems, stories, diaries and newspaper reports. By Year 6, pupils know the differences between formal and informal writing and use standard and non-standard English. However, pupils too rarely draft stories to help improve their quality, using the computers for example, and their use of vocabulary is limited, despite the attention teachers give to its development.
53. The development of pupils' handwriting is not given enough emphasis. As a result, standards of presentation in pupils' workbooks are unacceptably varied. For example, some pupils are taught to join letters together before they are clearly shaped and correctly positioned, and taught handwriting skills are not readily transferred to other areas. Spelling has been identified as an area of needed improvement. Each class now implements a spelling focus, although it is too early to evaluate the impact of this initiative on pupils' learning. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to help pupils with their spelling, by encouraging the use of dictionaries and thesauruses, for example, or pupils' own vocabulary books.
54. Teaching and learning are good overall. Some very good teaching was observed at times in both key stages during the inspection. In the best lessons, the teachers' subject knowledge was secure, the lessons' content was challenging for pupils of all abilities and teachers' probing questioning and use of talking partners helped develop pupils' understanding effectively. In most lessons the teachers' enthusiasm ensures

that pupils' attitudes to learning are good. The marking of pupils' work is very good because it helps them to move forward as well as acknowledging and valuing what they have achieved. Colourful classroom displays help to extend pupils' vocabulary, stimulate interest and involvement and celebrate their efforts. The curriculum is enriched through visits, such as into Durham city centre, and visitors, such as drama groups and storytellers. These bring the subject to life, help motivate pupils and explain their positive attitudes. Teachers ensure that homework is used well to support and extend learning.

55. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who provides a very good role model for her colleagues through the quality of her English teaching. She is proactive in planning and leading the implementation of needed developments. This has contributed to the good improvement since the previous inspection. For example, data from national tests is rigorously analysed to help identify and overcome weaknesses. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked through consistent approaches to assessing and recording what they know and understand. However, the co-ordinator has insufficient opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and contribute towards the further development of teachers' skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to speak, listen, read and write as part of their work in other subjects. Approaches to developing literacy skills across the curriculum are not yet systematic enough to ensure that pupils have the best possible opportunities to increase their vocabulary and improve their language skills through the full range of National Curriculum subjects. However, the school has already identified this as a priority in its school improvement plan.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well
- Pupils do better in number than in other areas of mathematics; they have too few opportunities to develop skills of problem solving and data handling
- Teachers plan a good variety of mental mathematics activities at the start of lessons
- Teachers communicate an enthusiasm for mathematics which results in pupils wanting to learn
- The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well, ensuring there is a clear focus on raising standards across the school
- The school lacks a planned approach to helping pupils use their mathematical skills

Commentary

57. Good teaching ensures that most pupils make good progress, from a low starting point in mathematics. As a result pupils achieve well, even though standards are currently below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
58. The results of statutory assessment in 2004 indicate that standards were broadly in line with those achieved by pupils in other schools at the end of Year 2, but well below average at the end of Year 6. Consequently standards appear to be better than they

were at the time of the previous inspection in Year 2, but not as good in Year 6. However, care needs to be exercised in interpreting the results of statutory assessment because there are such low numbers of pupils in each year group and, in some, high levels of mobility. In part, this accounts for what appear to be the markedly different standards attained by different year groups of pupils.

59. Throughout the school pupils have a better knowledge and understanding of some areas of mathematics than others. By Year 2, most pupils have acquired a satisfactory understanding of number operations, although a significant proportion of them continue to make basic errors in basic calculations. They are beginning to understand different strategies for adding and subtracting, with higher attaining pupils confident and accurate in adding on 9 or 11. At this stage pupils know the names of common three-dimensional shapes and are confident in identifying symmetrical patterns. Many pupils find it more difficult when applying their knowledge, particularly with word problems, because of their underdeveloped language skills. By Year 6 pupils have extended their understanding of number and calculation appropriately, with many showing they have a sound understanding of place value. They are also able to draw on different strategies when completing calculations. In the work they have completed on shape this year, pupils demonstrate their understanding of the properties of two-dimensional shapes, including angles, and they are able to work out the areas of irregular shapes using this knowledge. Pupils' ability to solve problems is again a weakness and, although their language skills are still a barrier, they nevertheless have too few opportunities to develop the skills and understanding needed. At this stage, pupils also have an underdeveloped understanding of data handling because they have done too little work in this area.
60. Teaching is good overall; the lesson seen with Year 2 pupils during the inspection was very good. Teachers place a strong emphasis on extending pupils' mental mathematics skills. Openings of lessons are well thought out with identified objectives and there is an emphasis on brisk pace as teachers introduce a good variety of activities to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. These mental activities are most effective where teachers are able to provide differently for the various groups in the class. This was done well, for example, in a lesson with Year 3 and 4, where the teacher worked intensively with some of the class while the higher attainers worked with the computers.
61. Teaching is generally lively and interesting, with teachers communicating a real enthusiasm which engages pupils and ensures they enjoy mathematics lessons. Teachers are skilful with questioning which enables them to check pupils' understanding and, where needed, to modify the tasks they have set for individuals or groups. This means that all pupils are appropriately challenged and enabled to make good progress. Classroom assistants also provide good support in doing this, which helps ensure that pupils' learning is good. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to attract and retain pupils' attention and promote their learning. In one lesson for example, with Year 5 and 6, pupils checking their estimations of angles responded enthusiastically, were fully engaged and keen to do more. Teachers are also good at making mathematics relevant to their pupils. In a very good lesson with Year 2 pupils for example, the teacher used a letter from Barnaby Bear to focus the specific objectives and tasks for the lesson. This was very motivating, ensuring that pupils were not only immediately interested but that they fully participated throughout. Throughout the school pupils generally have positive attitudes and behave well. They respond positively to the good teaching they receive and this contributes to their making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive good and

effective support, enabling them to participate fully in lessons and to make good gains in learning.

62. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of where further development is needed and plans effectively to ensure this happens. There is a firm focus on raising standards. Detailed analyses of assessment results enable the co-ordinator to identify specific areas for each teacher to work on and this effectively underpins their planning and target setting. As yet, however, the co-ordinator has insufficient time to monitor teaching and support the further development of other teachers' skills.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Pupils sometimes use their mathematics skills in their work in other subjects and where this happens it satisfactorily helps pupils develop an appreciation of their practical uses. For example, pupils make measurements in design and technology and they use graphs and tables to record data in science. However, such opportunities tend to occur incidentally and not as a result of systematic planning. The school lacks a planned strategy for pupils to develop and use their mathematical skills and knowledge in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well although overall standards are below average
- Pupils' limited language skills restricts their ability to record their work appropriately
- There is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' skills of investigation
- The use of appropriate scientific vocabulary is good and contributes positively to pupils' thinking
- Teaching is good; at times teachers communicate a real enthusiasm for science
- The school has identified aspects for further development and planned to address them

Commentary

64. Although pupils reach standards which are broadly in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in some topics, overall standards in science are currently below average. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. However, achievement is good, because pupils do well to make good progress from a low starting point.
65. An appropriate range of topics is planned to ensure that the science curriculum is covered, but this is not reflected in the amount or quality of the work in pupils' books. This is because many pupils have difficulties recording their work. However, in some topics pupils demonstrate they have acquired appropriate knowledge even though they have not been able to record it well. Pupils in Year 3 and 4, for example, showed how well they knew the major organs in the human body in a history lesson on the ancient Egyptians and mummification.
66. Throughout the school there is insufficient emphasis on promoting pupils' skills of scientific investigation. Although an effective start is made in Year 2 with a focus on some key questions and solving problems, as they test the insulation properties of different materials for example, elsewhere pupils have too few opportunities to develop these skills. In Year 5 and 6 pupils are helped to understand how to plan an investigation, with a planning sheet which takes them through the process, but when they have to work on their own, pupils are much less secure in their understanding of issues such as fair testing.
67. The way in which teachers introduce and use appropriate scientific vocabulary is good and contributes positively to pupils' thinking and learning. Pupils in Year 2 have good opportunities to record the outcomes of their work in different ways, pictorially as well as in writing, and they illustrate the results of what they have done with pictograms or using the computer to create bar charts.
68. Although it was possible to see only one lesson during the inspection, there was sufficient other evidence to indicate that teaching is good throughout the school. The strong focus on teaching pupils relevant scientific terms was evident in the lesson seen, with pupils in Years 5 and 6 introduced to mixture, separation and filtration. Teachers' planning indicates that they identify clear and specific learning objectives, which is helping them match tasks and activities to pupils' particular needs. In the lesson seen, for example, the teacher effectively built on pupils' prior learning by firstly reinforcing their understanding of mixture. This then enabled her introduce the specific objective for the lesson with the challenge to separate a solid from a liquid. Good questions kept pupils focused on the task and helped them think through the process. The teacher provided appropriate direction and instruction on how to use some of the equipment and this was successful in enabling pupils to then work in their small groups. The classroom assistant provided good support to one group ensuring that they were fully able to join in the lesson. Such lively and engaging teaching, with the teacher communicating a real enthusiasm, ensured that pupils were interested and involved right from the start.
69. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The temporary co-ordination of the subject by the headteacher has ensured stability and enabled her to identify some aspects for further development, including improvement in the school's approach to teaching skills of scientific investigation. Appropriate plans are in place to tackle this and further training for teachers organised. A new co-ordinator has been identified,

who is enthusiastic and keen to make progress on this further development work. There is a strong determination to raise standards. The recent organisation of a science club, with links to the British Association for Young Scientists, is contributing to raising the profile of science in the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below those expected at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, but most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their capabilities
- Although the computer suite is used regularly and teachers make good use of the new interactive whiteboards, pupils generally have too few opportunities to work with the computers to extend their skills
- Not all aspects of the ICT curriculum are covered appropriately
- The school is fully committed to making further improvements and raising standards
- As at the time of the last inspection, there are too few links with other subjects to help pupils develop, reinforce, extend or use important skills

Commentary

70. Although standards are below those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. This is because, although too little direct teaching was seen during the inspection to make judgements about its quality overall, evidence indicates that teachers are more confident and competent teaching most requirements of the curriculum than at the time of the last inspection, when provision was underdeveloped. The subject is given increasing emphasis with pupils now having regular hands-on experiences to help develop important skills. As a result, most pupils try hard to succeed because they have positive attitudes to learning. Approaches to assessing and recording pupils' progress are good and pupils are helped to understand how to improve their knowledge and skills.
71. Most classes use the computer suite regularly, which enables them to practise and develop key skills. The suite's limited size has organisational implications, which are overcome effectively to help ensure pupils have regular access. However, both the computer suite and computers in classrooms are not yet used often enough to give pupils the best possible chance to succeed. Most teachers give pupils the same work, whatever their ability, which prevents some pupils from making the best possible progress, particularly the higher attainers, who consequently do not always achieve as well as they can. Teachers use the new interactive whiteboards effectively as tools to help pupils learn, but do not yet involve pupils enough in their use. Displays in classrooms are used well to help consolidate learning, teach important vocabulary and motivate pupils, especially in Key Stage 1.
72. Teachers use national guidelines to help them plan and teach what is required. However, not all areas of the curriculum are given sufficient emphasis. Pupils are increasingly using ICT to present information and ideas in different forms. Data handling, such as through the use of spreadsheets, for example, is developing well. However, control technology is not yet given enough emphasis, such as the control of on-screen equipment by a series of instructions, for example, and pupils do not yet share ideas and information using e-mail. Pupils do not use ICT enough to draft and re-draft their writing to help improve its quality and the use of a digital camera to extend, support and record their work is embryonic. Teachers do not pay enough attention to encouraging pupils to compare the effectiveness of ICT with other methods of communication.

73. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has compiled clear plans for the subject's continued development to help raise standards and she has overseen improvements to resources. She does not yet monitor teaching and learning effectively, however, to help her identify what works well and what still needs doing. A more rigorous approach is needed to help secure further improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. While there is some evidence of the use of ICT across the curriculum, as pupils use the Internet for research purposes in history, for example, overall this is unsatisfactory. The computers in the suite and the classrooms are not used enough to help pupils develop, reinforce and extend important skills through the full range of subjects.

HUMANITIES

75. It was not possible to observe any lessons in **history** during the inspection and only two in **geography**. These subjects were not a main focus for the inspection. There was also a limited amount of completed work in pupils' books. Consequently there is insufficient evidence to support a judgement about provision in these subjects.
76. Standards of work seen in both history and geography are well below those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is because both subjects are not taught often enough to help ensure that pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding at rates which will help them to reach national expectations. Pupils record too little work to help them consolidate their learning.
77. There is good emphasis on developing skills of historical enquiry and first-hand experiences to bring both subjects alive. For example, pupils in Year 2 learn about Victorian life from artefacts in their classroom museum. In Years 3 and 4 pupils learn about the ancient Egyptians and in Years 5 and 6 the ancient Greeks, through a study of artefacts. In geography, pupils compare the landscapes of Durham and Tynemouth. However, work lacks depth and quality and is completed to levels which are well below those expected nationally. Overall, there is evidence of more work in history than geography in displays and in pupils' completed work.
78. Links with other subjects, including with literacy and ICT, are evident, but require further development. For example, in history pupils in Years 5 and 6 make inferences from text and illustrations about the life of ancient Greeks, and use the Internet for research purposes. In geography, older pupils, in a link with mathematics, carry out a traffic survey when they visit Durham city centre. Visits help to bring both subjects alive. For example, in history, pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit the museum of archaeology at the Old Fulling Mill which provides the stimulus for extended writing. In geography, pupils use a visit into Durham to write about the appeal of the city to tourists.
79. Approaches to assessing pupils' progress in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding are not yet securely established so that it can be carefully tracked. Most work is not matched carefully to pupils' precise needs to enable them to make best possible progress. However, the enthusiastic co-ordinator is committed to raising standards in both subjects.

Religious education

80. Only one lesson in religious education was timetabled during the inspection. The range of work in pupils' books was also extremely limited, so there is insufficient evidence to support a judgement about provision in this subject.
81. Discussions with pupils indicate that their knowledge and understanding do not match that expected in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education in Year 2 and Year 6. The school's own monitoring indicates that the required syllabus is not being fully

covered in Years 3 to 6, and as a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding of some faiths required to be covered are very weak. Previously, older pupils visited a local Sikh temple, but they are unable to explain any of the key features of Sikhism now. Pupils say that religious education lessons are often used to finish off work from other subjects instead. This may explain why there are very long gaps between the dated work in pupils' books.

82. In the lesson seen during the inspection, a wonderful experience was provided for Year 2 pupils. The classroom was transformed, with church music, electric candles, incense and religious artefacts for pupils to explore. However, planning for religious education does not make clear precisely what pupils are expected to learn each week. As a result, the lesson missed opportunities to help pupils build on their existing knowledge and understanding. Teachers make an assessment of the level that each pupil has reached in religious education at the end of each school year. However, many of these are not accurate because there is no clear way established in the school, to measure pupils' attainment in all the required elements of the locally agreed syllabus.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

83. It was not possible to observe any lessons in **art and design**, **design and technology** or **music** during the inspection and consequently there is insufficient evidence to support a judgement about provision in these subjects.
84. The quality of pupils' **art** work on display is very good, due to the impact of the work pupils have done for the art exhibition this term. The high quality of the mounting and display of much of this work is very motivating for pupils and effective in raising their self-esteem. In Year 2 pupils have used watercolours, showing they can mix colours effectively in completing their landscape pictures. By Year 5 and 6 pupils have had opportunity to work with a range of materials, including pastels in their high quality pictures of scenes of India following a visit from an artist from Bangalore. They have also completed work in the style of other artists such as Clarice Cliff.
85. Although there was less work in **design and technology** on display, as in art it indicates the benefit of pupils working with visitors from outside. The work that pupils in Years 5 and 6 completed on creating and testing structures with a visiting engineer is good.
86. Although there were no opportunities to observe lessons in **music**, in assemblies pupils' singing was enthusiastic and tuneful, with pupils joining in with appropriate actions at times. This was well led by the teacher. Where a tape-recorded accompaniment was used, older pupils found it more difficult to join in with the singing. Pupils are able to listen to music, as they enter or leave the hall for assembly, for example, but opportunities are missed to provide them with some information about what they are listening to or the composer.
87. It was possible to observe only two lessons in **physical education** during the inspection and consequently there is insufficient evidence to support a judgement about provision in this subject. The large hall provides very good facilities for physical education.
88. It was clear from the lessons seen that pupils enjoy lessons and in both Year 2 and Years 5 and 6 they work hard to improve their skills. In their lesson in dance, pupils in

Year 2 worked at a level expected of pupils their age, which is similar to that reported in the previous inspection. These pupils understand the reasons why warming up is important and what happens to their bodies when they do. At this stage pupils demonstrated good control over their movements and many showed good imagination as they worked on different movement and shape.

89. In Years 5 and 6 the quality of pupils' work was better than expected because of the excellent teaching they received. In the gymnastics lesson seen, pupils concentrated very well on their balances, persevering at improving the quality of their work and in doing so made good progress. The high quality of teaching in this lesson ensured pupils were set challenging tasks and were very effectively supported as they worked on them, which contributed most positively to pupils' very good achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are good at promoting pupils' personal development through their teaching
- There are missed opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in the school

Commentary

90. Almost all lessons are characterised by a very strong focus on pupils' personal development. This is particularly successful, contributing to the way that teachers manage pupils' behaviour. A very positive atmosphere is established that allows pupils to flourish in many lessons, helping them to develop confidence and increasing their self-esteem.
91. The school works well with outside agencies to provide pupils with information about drug misuse and sex education. The trusting relationships in the school contribute well to this. The buddy system throughout the school, and the mediators in Year 6, provide pupils with good opportunities to help sort out any bullying or friendship problems. The school council provides an ideal opportunity for personal development, but the impact of this is limited in those classes where representatives are not elected.
92. Planning for personal, social and health education appropriately indicates the topics that pupils are expected to cover. However, older pupils are unable to talk confidently about democracy, and rights and responsibilities, which the school's curriculum indicates they should have covered this year.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
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	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
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	5
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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