

INSPECTION REPORT

NEW HARTLEY FIRST SCHOOL

New Hartley

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122224

Headteacher: Mrs J A Crowder

Lead inspector: Mr J J Peacock

Dates of inspection: 7th - 8th February 2005

Inspection number: 267379

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	125
School address:	Melton Drive New Hartley Northumberland
Postcode:	NE25 0RD
Telephone number:	0191 237 1218
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E A Black
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than other primary schools, with 125 pupils on roll and with roughly an equal number of girls and boys. This is almost the same as at the previous inspection in June 1999. Following the last inspection, the school was awarded 'Beacon' status but the Government ended this initiative in July 2004. Almost all pupils are from white, British backgrounds but there is a very small number for whom English is an additional language. Punjabi is their first language but all speak English fluently. The number travelling from outside the normal catchment area has increased from 10 per cent to 15 per cent since the previous inspection. Pupils are from a wide and varied range of socio-economic backgrounds. However, attainment on entry to the nursery class for most is below that expected for children of this age.

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, at 6.4 per cent, is below average. There is 1.2 per cent with a statement of special educational need, which is also below average. Currently, there are 8 pupils on the register for those with special educational needs and the school meets the needs of three of these from its own resources. Specialist help is provided for the rest, most of whom have moderate learning difficulties. Mobility is not significant, with only 3 pupils leaving or joining during the year. The latest figures show that 11 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25344	Mr J J Peacock	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Geography History Physical education
11084	Mrs J Hughes	Lay inspector	
32347	Mrs J Brighthouse	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology Religious education
32750	Mr P Jones	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a highly effective school with many excellent features. As a result, pupils of all ages and ability levels achieve very well. Inspired by a deeply committed and truly exceptional headteacher, the many areas of excellence reported in the previous inspection have been maintained through a process of continuous improvement. Governors and staff have high expectations and work very effectively as a team, striving to create a centre of excellence. In this climate of outstanding care and concern for the needs of the individual, pupils have an excellent attitude towards their work and enjoy excellent relationships with all staff. The school is providing very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The excellent leadership and management by the headteacher, who strives to make things even better than they are;
- Governance is of the highest possible standard;
- Pupils are consistently achieving high standards in English, mathematics and science;
- Teaching is a strength, with all teachers and teaching assistants having very high expectations and all working most effectively as a team;
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good and results in pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour;
- The outstanding level of care helps to cement the excellent relationships which exist in school and this enhances the quality of learning.

The improvement since the previous inspection has been good. There were no significant weaknesses identified previously and none were found during this inspection. This is not surprising, as everyone is locked into a process of continuous improvement. Governors and staff rigorously monitor and evaluate all aspects of school life. All staff work closely as a team to support and help each other tackle new initiatives, such as latest computer whiteboard technology.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The table shows the results achieved by 7-year-olds based on average points scores in national curriculum tests.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	A*	A*	A	A
writing	A*	A*	A	A
mathematics	A*	A	A	A

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; A indicates a result in the top 5 per cent.*

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Pupils' achievement is very good. This includes those with special educational needs and the very small number who speak English as an additional language. The table above shows that pupils' overall performance is successfully maintained year-on-year. This is due to a number of factors, the most significant being the consistently high quality of teaching, which helps to engage and motivate all pupils. There is no marked difference in the performance of girls and boys. The children in the Foundation Stage, which is the part-time nursery each morning and the reception class, also achieve very well in all six areas of learning because of very good teaching. All make rapid progress and nearly all reach the goals they are expected to well before the end of reception. Overall, standards in English, mathematics and science for pupils in Years 2 and 4 are well above average.

In mathematics, pupils in Year 4 are on course to attain very high standards for their age. Standards throughout are above those expected in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. Speaking and listening skills, a priority for improvement, are a strength, making a major contribution to the quality of learning and the standards being achieved. There was insufficient evidence to make reliable judgements about standards in other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, are very good. They have an excellent attitude and behaviour is exemplary. Bullying is not a problem at this school. Pupils love coming to school and attendance is well above average. The more effective use of music in assemblies would help provide atmosphere and a better sense of occasion.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning overall are very good. Assessment procedures have been continuously improved and are very good, with very effective use being made of assessment information in teachers' planning. Teaching remains a key strength and is instrumental in ensuring that all pupils achieve very well and in maintaining high standards. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in virtually all classes. This is characterised by inspirational and enthusiastic teachers and teaching assistants, which results in pupils being totally engrossed in their work. It leads to very high achievement. Relationships with pupils throughout are excellent and all staff have very high expectations of themselves and their pupils. Their lesson planning is exceptionally detailed and very effectively caters for all pupils from the nursery to Year 4. A small point for improvement is the quality of marking in mathematics and science. This needs to give more guidance to pupils on how to further improve their work. The school provides excellent support and guidance for pupils and has very good partnerships with parents, other local schools through its 'Beacon' work and the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. Governance is excellent. All statutory requirements are met. The headteacher's leadership is excellent. Her drive and determination, knowledge and expertise have deservedly won the confidence and respect of everyone. Teamwork is the key to success, with all staff, including the very efficient secretary and conscientious caretaker playing their part. The team has an outstanding leader, ably supported by the astute deputy. Governors constantly monitor all aspects and challenge the headteacher and staff in a helpful and supportive way. Subject co-ordination is very good as co-ordinators prepare clear action plans based on rigorous and regular reviews. Aspects such as self-evaluation, strategic and financial planning and staff's commitment to training and improvement are all excellent.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive and very appreciative of what the school does for their children. Pupils know their views are important and have plenty of opportunities to share them with staff. Parents and pupils alike appreciate the warm friendly relationships with the dedicated and extremely caring staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

No significant areas of weakness were found. However, there are two aspects that the school might further improve. These are developing the use of the latest computer technology and including more developmental comments when marking in science and mathematics. The school has already identified the first and is working on it.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The overall level of achievement for most pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good. Pupils achieve particularly well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 2 and 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 2 and 4 is very good;
- Children do very well in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning;
- All pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

Commentary

1. In the previous inspection report in 1999, a significant improvement was reported in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics were very high. The very high standards were maintained from 2001 through to 2003 giving the school a very good record in the national tests for 7-year-olds for this period. This reflects the determination of the headteacher to continuously improve all aspects and teachers' willingness to work very effectively as a team, concentrating on providing the best possible education for pupils. The excellent level of care and excellent relationships between staff and pupils add significantly to the quality of learning. Speaking and listening skills, a school priority for improvement this year, were judged to be a strength, making a major contribution to learning and the standards being achieved in all subjects. All these factors combine to create an excellent ethos for learning and make the school as successful as it is.
2. Children in reception enter with skills that are generally below those expected for their age. They achieve very well and quickly attain the goals expected in all areas of learning well before the end of their reception year. All make very good progress because of the very good quality of provision. The most successful aspects were found to be developing children's language skills, their social and creative development. These areas of learning are particularly well taught. As a result, children quickly gain confidence and willingly answer questions or explain their views. The attractive and imaginatively set out teaching areas and good range of resources make the nursery and reception classes exciting places for children to learn.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.7 (18.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.0 (17.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.0 (18.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In the 2004 national tests for 7-year-olds, standards were well above average in all three areas tested and well above average for similar schools. In writing, the school's performance was in the top 5 per cent nationally. This is a remarkable achievement for the school when children are admitted with attainment below the level expected for their age. The performance has been achieved despite relatively small year groups, where each pupil represents a high percentage figure, and there are some pupils with special educational needs. The provision for these pupils is very good, enabling all to achieve very well in

relation to their ability. The consistently high standards in national tests are a direct result of the very good quality of teaching and pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour. In the teacher assessments for science, standards were below average despite 94 per cent achieving the nationally expected level. It was well above average for those achieving the higher Level 3 with 50 per cent of pupils reaching this level. In the current Year 2, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science.

4. Inspection evidence shows that standards in Year 4 are well above average in English, mathematics and science, with a high proportion of pupils on target to attain Level 4 by the end of the school year. This is the level normally expected by the end of Year 6 for most pupils. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is exceptionally good and they are on course to achieve very high standards by the end of the year, with well over half attaining Level 4 two years earlier than expected. A detailed assessment of all pupils' work in Year 4 shows that they are achieving very well in relation to their starting point on entry to school. There is no significant difference in the achievement of girls and boys. The school has good procedures in place to compare the achievement of pupils from a minority ethnic background with other pupils. However, there are very few at the school at present, making valid comparisons difficult. The very few who speak English as an additional language are fully integrated in lessons and all speak English fluently. Their level of achievement matches that for all other pupils.
5. Standards throughout are above those expected in both ICT and religious education. The school is very well resourced with computers and these are used effectively to support pupils' learning in most subjects. Teachers are rapidly coming to grips with the recently installed computer-linked whiteboards and some are making good use of them in lessons. Developing the use of this new technology has been identified as a priority for the current year. Another school priority is to successfully implement the new locally agreed syllabus for religious education. All staff are busy adapting this to fit in with their termly planning. As other subjects were only sampled, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgement on overall standards.
6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Through quality, well directed support, very good teaching and excellent planning they are able to successfully reach the targets set for them. In most cases, these pupils achieve nationally expected levels in the national tests. The achievement of the highest attaining pupils is also very good. In lessons, high attaining pupils are well catered for and activities are well planned to meet their specific talents, offer them challenge and extend their learning. The school has begun to compile a register of gifted and talented pupils based on academic ability. Four pupils have been identified so far and their parents informed. A policy has also been developed and some accelerated learning activities provided. The very close partnership between the school and parents is ensuring that the specific needs of these few pupils are being met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Provision for pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development is very good. Attendance is well above the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to succeed;
- Children behave impeccably and forge first class relationships;
- Even the youngest children make the most of every opportunity to become increasingly independent;
- Pupils develop impressive value systems as they emulate adult role models;
- Attendance rates are consistently high.

Commentary

7. New Hartley pupils acknowledge that this is a great place to learn and they keep coming back for more. The far higher than average attendance figures confirm that pupils wholeheartedly embrace school life. From the very start, young children come into nursery and reception with a smile and happily wave goodbye to parents and carers. Their expectations are high, because they associate school with exciting activities and new experiences. They delight in newfound friends and stimulating classrooms and launch into tasks with gusto. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate an eagerness to learn; they listen attentively, persevere with tasks set and consistently produce high quality work. They are proud of their school and their individual achievements.
8. The school is an oasis of calm; everyone is focused on what they need to do, yet never too busy to help others. When someone is in difficulty, pupils respond with sensitivity and real regard for others; it is common to see pupils holding hands or putting a reassuring arm around another's shoulder. Pupils take their lead from the highly professional standards modelled by staff in the school. Pupils learn the strength that can be gained from teamwork and this reflects in their behaviour as they work with and alongside their peers.
9. Outstandingly successful relationships are nurtured between all members of this school family, and pupils are quite clear that they can go to any adult with a problem. Teaching and non-teaching staff know the children's backgrounds very well and mutual trust and respect spill out from each interaction. Lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions and pupils know the supervisors very well, as they also work in classrooms during the day.
10. Pupils of all ages make the most of every opportunity to take responsibility for different aspects of school life. They fulfil their roles competently and with the minimum of fuss. The youngest children are quick to learn where resources are kept and do not expect other people to tidy up after them. They show maturity from an early age because adults expect no less from them. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils with special educational needs is excellent and they fully participate in all activities.
11. Impressive rates of attendance reflect pupils' desire to come to school. Parents make sure that their children come to school regularly and on time. They are conscientious about informing the school of any reasons for absence and staff monitor attendance patterns throughout the year. Any potential concerns are identified immediately and addressed. The secretary operates an effective 'first day of absence' call procedure to parents and this works well.
12. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good, with excellent relationships paramount throughout the school, and respect for self and others very evident. Pupils are made increasingly aware of others' emotions and the school provides experiences, particularly in religious education, for pupils to raise questions, reflect and think deeply. The work older pupils have done on the creation of the 'Banner' with the local community group has helped them to empathise with their past and people in it. The quality of collective worship is good. However, it could be further improved and made even more special by giving more time for reflection and by using music more effectively to provide atmosphere and to accompany singing.
13. Moral and social development provision is excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and there is impressively consistent behaviour management across the school. Adults provide good role models and fund raising activities for Comic Relief, Children in Need, Remembrance Day and the recent Tsunami disaster all contribute to the outstanding ethos of the school. Collaborative and co-operative skills are encouraged from the nursery upwards and staff expectation is high. Older pupils take responsibility in a variety of ways and set a good example for younger pupils. The formation of a school council is well under way and this will give even more opportunities for pupils to express their views.

14. Provision for cultural development is very good. Displays around the school showing aspects of other cultures, for example Indian art and a Muslim prayer mat, contribute well to pupil awareness, as does the work they do in religious education, learning about different faiths, their values and traditions. The project being undertaken on the 'Banner' has a huge impact on their cultural knowledge as they learn more about the local heritage and the people who lived in the mining community. To further enrich this area, the school needs to foster more links with areas who have a wider ethnic diversity.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

15. There were no exclusions in the past school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. The curriculum is very good, meeting statutory requirements and providing lots of opportunities for enrichment both within and outside of the school day. Children in reception are exceptionally well cared for and the level of care elsewhere is also outstandingly good. There are very strong links with parents, the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are very good with many excellent features. Assessment procedures are very good and teachers use assessment information very effectively in their planning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff work exceptionally well as a team;
- Teaching is consistently very good or excellent;
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well taught and supported;
- Teachers have the highest expectations of pupils and, based on detailed assessments, plan interesting and challenging lessons for pupils of all ability levels;
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent;
- The quality of marking in mathematics and science could be better.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	17	4	0	0	0	0

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

16. There have been few staff changes, the last teacher appointed being the part-time teacher for the nursery nearly five years ago. This stability has enabled the teaching staff to build up an excellent working relationship with one another. All are extremely conscientious and totally focused on providing the best possible education for the pupils in their charge. Under the guidance of the headteacher, all work very effectively as a team and are constantly looking to improve their teaching performance. When the school had 'Beacon' status following the previous successful inspection, teachers' expertise was often shared with colleagues in other local schools. Detailed records going back for ten years of their attendance at training courses clearly demonstrates their professionalism and their commitment to developing their knowledge and expertise. As a result, the quality of teaching is a key strength, largely responsible for the high standards being maintained and for pupils' excellent attitudes towards school. Parents are very appreciative of the excellent relationship teachers and pupils enjoy.
17. Teachers work very hard to ensure that every pupil reaches their full potential. Their expectations of pupils and the level of challenge they provide are of the highest order. There is an air of calm in every class as teachers ask for and get the very best behaviour from all pupils. Lesson planning is excellent and teachers succeed in inspiring pupils of all ability levels to do their best.
18. In a literacy session with all Year 3 and 4 pupils, the headteacher and deputy head set the scene brilliantly for a lesson which captured pupils' imagination. Following an accident when a pupil was knocked over by a car, a courtroom scene was set up. Pupils had to work collaboratively to prepare witness statements and the cases for the prosecution and defence. This was a highly innovative, stimulating and challenging experience for all. Teacher expertise and astute planning ensured excellent achievement for all pupils. It was an excellent example of collaborative work and independent learning by pupils. The outstanding teaching resulted in an excellent learning experience that was a joy to see.
19. All teachers are routinely and regularly involved in monitoring the quality of their work and often discuss strengths and weaknesses collectively. All are determined to bring about improvement and to maintain the high expectations that they have for themselves and the school. This has a major impact, resulting in the very good quality of learning which is achieved throughout the school.
20. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good in all six areas of learning. During the inspection, teaching was never less than very good. This consistently high quality ensures that all children make rapid progress. The excellent relationships which exist between children and all adults are a key feature, helping children to settle in quickly and gain in confidence. All staff plan lessons together and work very well as a team. All have the highest expectations of children and provide a very good and imaginative curriculum, which meets children's needs extremely well. All children, whatever their ability or special needs, are supported very well during lessons. Information from effective assessment procedures is used very well to plan work at the correct level for all children, including those with special educational needs. As a result, all children build successfully on their skills, which are often lower than expected for children of this age on entry to the school.
21. Examples of very good and excellent teaching were seen in all classes. Teaching of this high standard occurred in 22 of the 26 lessons seen and was characterised by the excellent rapport between teacher and pupils, a very good pace being maintained, which ensured pupils concentrated throughout, and challenging tasks. In a mathematics lesson with Year 1 pupils on solving problems with time, for example, the teacher's enthusiasm, pace and sense of fun captured the interest of all pupils. All were totally engrossed and responded eagerly to the tasks, especially after seeing the teaching assistant get things wrong when trying to demonstrate. The play acting between the adults was yet another ingenious strategy to help pupils understand what they were expected to do. Equality of opportunity is promoted well for all pupils throughout and care is taken to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and set appropriate tasks.

22. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. A thorough system of identification informs a very high standard of planning. This results in these pupils receiving work which is well matched to their ability, in line with their targets but with a level of suitable challenge. Pupils are included in all lessons and support staff intervene appropriately in order to extend their learning. Contributions made by these pupils in debate and speaking and listening activities is very good and clearly valued by the staff. The individual targets for English and mathematics, as well as those more specific to individual needs, are discussed with pupils to carefully monitor progress and how well targets are being met. One area for improvement is teachers' marking in science and mathematics, particularly in Years 3 and 4. It gives pupils with special educational needs and all other pupils little help in showing how they could further improve their work, as it mostly consists of ticks and occasionally praise.
23. The very good assessment procedures have been maintained from the previous inspection but the use teachers make of the information has been improved. Information about individual pupils or groups of pupils is taken into account when planning lessons. Teachers' detailed planning ensures that the needs of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs and the very few who speak English as an additional language, are met very well. Detailed assessments are made of individual pupils' progress as they move through the school and challenging new targets are set. Comparisons with the achievement of pupils in other local schools are possible from the wealth of data about each year group. These show that pupils at this school do very well and this is largely due to the quality of teaching that they receive.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is very good and meets statutory requirements. The school provides very good opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular provision. The overall quality of the accommodation and resources is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth of curricular opportunities for pupils of all ages and ability levels is very good;
- Despite its smaller than average size, the school provides a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities for its pupils;
- Curriculum development, including innovation, is very good.

Commentary

24. The school is fortunate to have such an inspirational leader and very talented and dedicated staff who work so well as a team. Curriculum planning is a key strength and this ensures that the quality of the curriculum on offer to pupils is innovative, rich and exciting. Pupils' response is reflected in their very good attendance and their excellent attitudes and behaviour. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and the quiet, calm and industrious atmosphere found in each classroom demonstrates their high level of concentration, as they experience the broad range of very good curricular opportunities. The needs of all pupils are catered for very effectively and this ensures all achieve very well.
25. The extension of the Foundation Stage to include a nursery class has had a very positive impact on standards and achievement higher up the school. The curriculum is well sequenced and innovative and, when combined with the very effective school ethos and teaching and learning strategies, promotes consistently high achievement for all abilities. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well. Individual education plans are drawn up, successful strategies identified, improvements noted and targets set and reviewed regularly. Support staff are included in this process, which helps them to support learning effectively and have an impact on achievement. Arrangements for transition between the stages of education in school and for pupil transfer to middle school are very well developed.

26. The personal development of pupils is given paramount importance from when they start school, with individuals encouraged to work as classes, in groups and independently. There are very effective personal, social and health education (PSHE) programmes in place. An example of the high quality of provision in this aspect was seen in the school entrance, with the 'issues tree'. Pupils collectively examined the difficulties facing people following the recent Tsunami in the Indian Ocean. It showed that pupils could empathise with the victims and their immediate needs. In assemblies, all pupils readily contribute to discussions about sharing and appreciating kindness. The excellent relationships that they enjoy in school between one another and with staff helps to give them a very good perspective on how people should behave and conduct themselves in every day life.
27. There are very good opportunities for the enrichment of learning provided by the school. For example, there are well planned topic days involving all pupils. These have covered religious education, Healthy Schools, Christmas and 'Thinking Skills', and provide exciting experiences culminating in performance or demonstration at the end of the day. The development of 'Thinking Skills' and philosophy is an ongoing school priority and this features on the weekly timetable for every class. The school staff are at the forefront in developing this subject area and have demonstrated their teaching skills to colleagues from other local schools who are keen to introduce the subject. There are regular visits from community figures and from performers, artists and sporting figures. The school runs a number of clubs for older pupils in computers and sport and, together with the Parent Teacher Association, organises a number of fairs, social and community events involving all pupils in the course of the year. There are very good links with local organisations, such as the Youth Club, Brownies and Rainbows, for the youngest pupils.
28. The staff and senior management work together to provide a regular and rigorous evaluation of the curriculum. The school's 'Beacon' status has led to more reflection and self-evaluation to inform planning and practice in all areas. Governors are fully involved in any changes and these are well managed. Innovation is implemented only to meet changing requirements or to improve standards. The school has successfully introduced 'Thinking Skills' into the curriculum and this has had a significant impact on teachers' planning and teaching methods. Pupils have many more opportunities to work collaboratively and speaking and listening skills are being very effectively promoted as pupils work in groups to solve problems or discuss issues. Year 3 and 4 pupils, for example, worked exceptionally well to prepare their witness statements and the courtroom enactment for the case involving a child who was knocked down by a car. The process of continual improvement is evident, as staff are currently considering the introduction of a modern foreign language, following up the results of a recent survey of parental views. The high quality of the curriculum clearly demonstrates the commitment of all who work at the school to provide the best possible educational experiences for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

There is excellent provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Staff also provide excellent support, advice and guidance for pupils. The school is very good at involving pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures and practice to ensure children's well being are second to none;
- Staff are extremely knowledgeable about each child's individual needs;
- The school is small enough for staff to understand pupils' views very well.

Commentary

29. This school leaves nothing to chance where pupils' welfare is concerned. Staff are extremely well informed about what needs to be in place and all aspects of health and safety are conscientiously addressed. The secretary and caretaker work very well with the rest of the staff to complete an impressive team, who diligently oversee pupils' health, safety and general well being every day. The school grounds and buildings are immaculate and this care is reflected in the way pupils appreciate and respect the fabric of the school. Regular emergency drills, risk assessments and general staff training ensure that the school operates as a very secure establishment.
30. Child protection arrangements are well known to all staff and are ably co-ordinated by the deputy head, who is responsible for this area. Effective links exist with a range of outside agencies, who offer appropriate levels of support. The more vulnerable groups of children, such as those in public care, are provided with sensitive and appropriate support systems and staff are very aware of their particular needs and circumstances.
31. The school invests much time in continuing professional development aimed at supporting children's individual needs and their personal development. In 2004, for example, staff looked at issues surrounding Healthy Schools, personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE), 'Thinking Skills', health and safety and special needs. All pupils are treated as individuals; staff and pupils have a very clear understanding of each individual's targets and make sure these are attained. Staff set a very high standard from the beginning and pupils co-operate fully in this relentless quest for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs are offered similarly high levels of support. Parents are carefully included in all reviews and are able to complement the work of the school.
32. Effective links with pre-school groups ensure that staff can help new children to settle quickly at the start of the year. Pre-school visits familiarise children and parents with their new surroundings and children are able to soak up the cheery atmosphere in a relaxed manner. This gentle introduction to the school works well and is appreciated by parents.
33. From their very first day in school, the headteacher and staff encourage pupils to talk to adults about anything and everything. No one is cut off mid-flow during lessons and teachers encourage pupils to express their views, promoting in-depth discussions where pupils can exchange feelings and opinions without fear of ridicule. Pupils grow in confidence as they mature and are constantly stimulated by teachers asking 'How?' 'Why?' and 'What?' From time-to-time, pupils complete questionnaires about specific aspects of school life. Current plans to elect a school council will improve this staff/pupil interaction even further.

Links with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains very good links with parents, other schools and the community.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive exactly the right information they need to support their children at school;
- There are highly effective links with local schools;
- Close interaction with the community enables pupils to develop new skills and interests.

Commentary

34. Parents are just as happy with the school as their children. They say that they are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching, the care and fairness shown by staff and the leadership and management of the school. Parents know that their children make very good progress during their time in school and that standards are high.

35. The headteacher, governing body and staff go to great lengths to ensure that parents know exactly what the school expects from pupils and parents, what is happening in school and how well their children learn and develop. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved at every stage and play a key role in the process of identification, target setting and review. Staff time and energy are given to providing just the right amount of information. Publications such as the prospectus are interesting to read, while newsletters are brief and easily digested. Written progress reports to parents contain much evaluative comment and suitable targets towards which pupils should strive. Interim oral reports are efficiently prepared by staff and supported with handwritten notes to ensure a coherent and effective dialogue at parents' meetings. Parents contribute to assessments and have informal discussions with class teachers about pieces of work.
36. Parents are very supportive of the school and participate in many of the celebrations and events that are planned. The Parent Teacher Association is a vibrant organisation and is at the centre of the school's social programme. Some parents come in to help in lessons and are generous with their time and skills. The school nurtures any specific parental expertise and encourages parents to come in and share their knowledge with the children.
37. During the course of its 'Beacon' status, the school has been most successful in establishing links with local schools. Staff have shared expertise and experience with colleagues and the school has supported others with specific needs. These links have also given staff the opportunity to extend their own professional development and have been very worthwhile. The headteacher has taken this role very seriously and the school enjoys a very strong reputation locally. There is very effective liaison with pre-school groups and the transition arrangements with local middle schools are very well established.
38. The school nurtures its close community links very carefully and makes the best possible use of local skills to enrich pupils' learning. For instance, artists, drama groups and musicians come in to expand children's points of reference. Local service providers regularly come in to talk to pupils about their role of service in community life.
39. A spectacular instance of school and community partnership is brilliantly portrayed in the stunning 'Community Banner' project. Funded by external grants, local artists and craft workers have worked with teachers and pupils to produce three 'Banners', showing the village in the past, present and future. The pit, and the terrible disaster that befell it, is at the centre of each 'Banner' and each of the 206 lives lost is depicted by a separate bird. The whole project fires the imaginations of the children, while providing a huge opportunity to learn different crafts and sewing techniques. Such was the interest that community members now come in regularly to work on a huge school 'Banner' with the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Governance is excellent and the governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met. Leadership by key staff is very good. The leadership of the headteacher and the way staff and governors work as a team are the key aids to improving the quality of provision and the main barrier to learning is the below average attainment on entry and the variation in the number in each year group.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is led by an outstanding headteacher, who is an excellent role model for staff and pupils;
- Governors are incredibly loyal and extremely supportive, having the best interests of the school at heart;
- The school's self-evaluation and its use are excellent;
- The professional development of staff is excellent;
- Financial and strategic planning are excellent.

Commentary

40. Even though the school had a very successful inspection in 1999, there has been no complacency or slackening of pace in the collective efforts of all who work there to make things better still for the benefit of the pupils. The headteacher is the driving force, leading by example. She is a truly outstanding leader and her dedication, knowledge and expertise have deservedly won the confidence and respect of everyone. The experienced and long serving deputy head complements the skills of the headteacher exceptionally well and this further strengthens the leadership and management of the school. Teamwork is the key to success and the team benefits from having two like-minded people at the helm. Teachers tend to stay at the school for a long time and the stability in staffing is a strength in itself. They feel valued and are fully involved in all management decisions.
41. Governors are justifiably proud of their school and are an integral part of its success. They are extremely conscientious and visit often. Each visit has a purpose. For example, when they have helped to decide the priorities for action, governors agree what the criteria for success are going to be, then conduct an audit to establish a starting point. These reports give a clear description of the current situation but they could be improved by adding a summary which clearly identifies key strengths and areas for development. Termly progress reports are undertaken and findings are produced in an interim report to all governors. All aspects of school are closely and routinely monitored and governors consider it part of their role to challenge the headteacher and staff in a helpful and supportive way. For example, governors felt that the school's annual financial contribution to the school library service was not giving them value for money so they opted out. The staff had to use this funding more effectively to bring about an improvement in the quality and quantity of books available for pupils.
42. It is not surprising that, with the excellent commitment to continuous improvement shown by the headteacher, deputy head and governors, the school has developed excellent procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of its work. Subject co-ordination is very good, as co-ordinators play a vital role in monitoring and evaluating their subject areas. The stability in staffing has meant that there have been few changes to co-ordinators areas of responsibility. Consequently, all have developed an excellent knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects. All are deeply committed to developing their own subject expertise and detailed records of training courses attended going back for ten years clearly demonstrate that commitment. Each year, all co-ordinators prepare clear action plans based on rigorous and regular reviews of their subject. Those that are identified as priorities for action are dealt with in more depth than others and funded accordingly. All governors and teachers are responsible for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning each term and reporting their findings. As a result, the high standards pupils achieve are being maintained year-on-year.
43. An excellent clarity of vision, very strong sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school and its pupils has ensured equality of opportunity for all. Concern for the needs of the individual is paramount and this has resulted in excellent relationships between staff and pupils, as well as racial tolerance and understanding. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effectively managed by the headteacher and deputy head, who has a very good knowledge of all the pupils on the register, keeps detailed records and liaises closely with parents and outside agencies. An appointed governor for special educational needs also plays a vital monitoring role and the close family atmosphere in the school ensures that the specific needs of each pupil are effectively met. This enables pupils to achieve very well. The special needs of pupils who have a special gift or talent are also well documented and provided for by teachers.

44. The financial expertise of some governors is used effectively to allocate budgets and check carefully that the best value is being obtained from all expenditure. Governors know the school well and have an excellent long-term view with alternative strategies in place to ensure that the school budget is managed effectively, giving maximum benefit to pupils.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	312,383	Balance from previous year	66,163
Total expenditure	268,802	Balance carried forward to the next	43,581
Expenditure per pupil	2,400		

45. The expenditure per pupil is based on 112 pupils who were in school during the financial year. The school benefited from a substantial amount of additional funding when it had 'Beacon' status. This was kept separate from the normal annual funding and used to cover costs, such as staff absence as they delivered in-service training to staff in other local schools or supported local education authority initiatives. The contingency, at 14 per cent, is well above accepted limits. However, a large slice of this has been used to provide each class with a new computer based interactive whiteboard and higher than average staffing costs will see the surplus reduce to £16,579 by January 2006, which will be about average. The governors detailed strategic plan shows how they are prepared to adjust staffing and other costs should the planned transition to primary status be delayed beyond the anticipated two years from now.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children enter the part-time nursery from the age of 3 and the reception class according to the date of their 5th birthday. There are currently 26 children attending nursery in the mornings and 17 children in reception. There is a spread of ability on entry but overall it is below the level expected for children of this age. Children make rapid progress and nearly all will achieve the Early Learning Goals before the end of the Foundation Stage in all areas. This is an improvement since the last inspection. This is a result of the very good teaching and support children receive and the impact of the new nursery provision. The part-time nursery teacher and teaching assistant quickly establish routines and provide a secure and stimulating atmosphere with a very good range of well planned and exciting learning opportunities. This is built on in the reception class, where children become more confident in their independent learning, co-operation with others and acquiring new skills. Staff meet weekly to review the curriculum, ensure it has balance and there is regular monitoring of teaching and learning. The nursery was established in 2000 and the Foundation Stage team, led by the tireless and inspirational co-ordinator, have worked very successfully with senior management to set up and integrate the nursery extremely effectively.

Accommodation and resources are good, with a new well equipped nursery classroom, a new outdoor play area and a wild area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of the very good teaching and the high expectations set by staff;
- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's development;
- Very supportive relationships are established so that children feel confident and happy.

Commentary

46. Children make very good progress thanks to the clear routines, high expectations of staff and the individual attention given to children based on their needs. In the nursery, children are encouraged to dress and undress themselves, wash their hands and tidy up the classroom. They are given instruction and assistance in an effective and sensitive manner. Children in reception collaborate well together, respond very quickly to instructions from the teacher and achieve well, even when not directly supervised. The very good teamwork, calmness and consistency of the adults in both classes provide excellent examples for the children of how to work effectively in a considerate yet stimulating atmosphere.
47. Children are continually praised and taught early to appreciate and celebrate the efforts of others. They quickly learn the conventions of turn taking and co-operate well together, often assisting each other in tasks and activities. This continues in reception, with children routinely working together in a variety of situations, often showing concern and consideration for each other. In both classes, children feel secure and confident with each other and with adults, and this has helped them to succeed.
48. Their behaviour is very good in the classroom and the playground, and their levels of concentration, curiosity and application are well above what would normally be expected from children of this age. This is the result of the emphasis given by staff to children treating each other with courtesy and respect and their success in developing children's abilities in this area.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills and teaching is generally very good.

Commentary

49. The very good teaching in this area enables children to achieve very well. They are given many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. In the nursery they quickly learn rhymes and songs that they perform with accuracy and enthusiasm, thanks to the encouragement and praise given by staff. They are introduced to stimulating and colourful books and pictures immediately and exposed to new language and vocabulary. The teacher skilfully builds up their knowledge and confidence to engage in speaking, through carefully structured sessions for example, in class story time 'The Three Bears' involved children in telling the story and role playing part of it. Children are confident in producing marks they associate with letters and words, and their work is displayed and celebrated.
50. In reception, most children have very good reading ability for their age and also produce legible, meaningful handwriting. All write their own names and some write sentences and develop a simple narrative. The teacher is exceptionally skilled at making links between words and pictures in text to develop children's powers of comprehension and prediction. Their speaking and listening skills continue to develop; pupils ask and answer questions, discuss ideas and some justify their opinions.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support mathematical learning, which ensures that children achieve very well.

Commentary

51. Thanks to the very good teaching they receive, children achieve very well. In both classes, the range of tasks is varied and each is adapted to meet the needs of individual children. In the nursery, children are introduced to the concept of number and learn how to represent objects and shapes in three-dimensional form.
52. Reception children sort and count; they count to twenty confidently and understand simple mathematical terminology. Most recognise and order numbers within that range. In one lesson utilising the interactive whiteboard, they successfully matched the 6 shapes shown to real objects, such as balls and containers, and showed very good deductive skills when asked to consider their suitability for building. The pace and rigour of the very well planned lesson and the high expectations of the teacher resulted in very high levels of achievement. Children collect information and use it to develop their skills, as in the shoe survey undertaken by the class, and show some understanding of how to present data using computers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan activities and use questioning very well to enhance children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them;
- ICT is used effectively to support children's learning.

Commentary

53. A stimulating and well planned range of activities is made available to children of all abilities and the highly effective teaching ensures very high achievement. Children in the nursery are given many opportunities to use tools for a purpose, such as scissors and glue, and are extremely adept with these by the time they reach the reception class. In one highly imaginative and effective nursery session, a group worked with the teaching assistant investigating the properties of ice and water. Her careful and expert prompting and questioning, combined with her enthusiasm, conveyed a sense of awe and wonder to the children, as well as a thorough understanding of the processes involved. This is a typical example of how pupils in both classes gain knowledge and develop their imagination and initiative because of the very good teaching they receive.
54. Nursery children have experienced simple block printing and have an impressive 'Birthday Train'. Reception children have covered other topics on transport and clothes, and have produced very good drawings, number work and some simple labelling and writing. All children have good opportunities to explore and investigate outside the classroom, in the wild area and the playground.
55. Children make very good progress with their computer skills from nursery age and can access, save and print information before they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. Children in reception constructed models with purpose, either on computers or using mobile blocks, and some are able to evaluate and improve their work. Staff in both classes take every opportunity to encourage children in the use of computers and are skilled in building on children's existing abilities, with the result that they achieve very highly.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nursery children are developing high levels of skill and confidence, using large gymnastic apparatus.

Commentary

56. Children achieve very well as a result of the skilled and highly effective teaching they receive. Both nursery and reception children show increasing confidence in handling small objects, and nursery children demonstrated good co-ordination and confidence on a range of wheeled equipment in their outdoor play. They share the equipment responsibly and respond well to the directions of adults. There are good opportunities for role play, such as post office, mail delivery and crossing attendant, and staff are quick to involve children in conversation to further develop their language and communication skills.

57. In one nursery lesson in the hall using large apparatus, all children learned new skills and visibly grew in confidence, thanks to the skilled teaching of the teacher and teaching assistant. Reception children have good opportunities for physical education lessons including dance and gymnastics.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use materials imaginatively to create their own images;
- Teachers use a range of stimulating mediums to provide opportunities for children to explore and experiment.

Commentary

58. Children's achievement is again very good, as a result of the stimulating and varied range of activities provided in both classes and very good teaching. Nursery children have many opportunities to engage in creative play for example, they used the 'Bear's House' to dress up and use their imagination. They explore sounds and instruments at the 'Listening Table' and experiment with water, colours and brushes at the easel in the classroom, creating collages and paintings.
59. Reception children benefit from their experiences in the nursery. In one lesson they very successfully used musical instruments to tell the story of 'Handa's Surprise' that they had used in other lessons. The teacher used the work of the artist Seurat to demonstrate the medium of painting using dots, and children produced effective examples of their own, showing very good control of shape and form for their age.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in English is very good and very high standards have been sustained;
- The quality of teaching is very good overall, with some excellent features;
- Speaking and listening skills are particularly well developed.

Commentary

60. The school has continued to give a strong focus to English and the high standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. The Year 2 test results in 2004 showed above average pupil attainment and school assessments at Year 4 also reflected standards well above the national average for pupils at the age of 9. Work observed and analysed during the inspection, both in lessons and pupils' books, support the school's view of English being a strength. Analysis of tests and a detailed tracking system suggest the current Year 2 will attain equally high standards in English in 2005. Pupils in Year 4 are performing very well in English and work scrutinised, together with school assessments, shows that standards are well above those expected by the end of Year 4. All pupils are making very good progress throughout the school.

61. Pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is exceptionally high. This area of learning has been a recent focus and teachers place great importance on developing these skills, resulting in some excellent practice. In one lesson observed, Year 3 and 4 pupils of all abilities were challenged to participate in a courtroom drama session. Through astute preparation and appropriate initial teacher input, these pupils were led to enact a 'hearing', taking the roles of witnesses, jury and judges. This innovative and stimulating experience gave them the opportunity to develop 'Thinking Skills', in addition to speaking and listening skills. They managed the scenario themselves, pursuing logical, coherent lines of enquiry and then individually articulating their calculated and sophisticated reasons for reaching their verdict. Throughout the session, achievement was outstanding. Very good teaching overall and a wide range of planned activities provided in literacy lessons and across the curriculum lead to increased confidence and development of these skills in all classes.
62. Pupils achieve very well in reading and standards throughout are well above those expected. Pupils in Year 2 were observed reading together, demonstrating confidence, fluency and accuracy. When asked to take parts in a play script they read with enthusiasm and expression. Older pupils make good progress and show a good understanding of what they have read. Year 4 pupils interviewed showed an interest in reading, could discuss books they read at home and at school, giving opinions and expressing preferences. Comprehension skills are given a high focus and work in all pupils' books reflected that time is spent on developing these skills. Each class has its own well stocked library area and staff share resources whenever necessary. At present, there is no space for a central library area so library skills, such as research, have to be taught using the class library areas. Access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books is limited by the smaller size of these separate libraries and is a limiting factor in developing pupils' skills in using a library.
63. Achievement in writing overall is very high. Assessment is very good and pupils are set targets for their work, giving them a clear indication of how to improve. Writing tasks are relevant, wide ranging and interesting. All classrooms offer a literacy rich environment, with pupils' writing supported well through prompts, examples and displays which celebrate and give value to their work. Presentation and handwriting are consistently good and teachers' expectations in this area are high. Most pupils at Year 2 are using legible, well formed, joined writing in their work. The quality of teachers' marking is good, offering pupils constructive ways of how to improve their writing.
64. The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good, with many excellent features. This has a major impact on pupils' achievement and results in the high standards being maintained. Lessons are extremely well planned and resourced, with clear objectives communicated to pupils. Teachers use a wide range of teaching styles and strategies, as well as very good questioning techniques. Pace in lessons is a significant strength and, in an excellent Year 1 lesson, pupils of all abilities learned and achieved to a very high level through a plethora of challenging activities and some outstanding teaching. Support staff throughout are deployed very effectively, making a significant contribution to learning. In some lessons, they closely support pupils with special educational needs and all join in enthusiastically with introductory or final sessions, helping pupils to understand what is expected of them or helping to consolidate learning.
65. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has very good expertise and monitors standards closely through work scrutiny and lesson observation. Areas of development, such as speaking and listening skills, are quickly identified and the whole staff team work together on any areas for improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. The opportunities to use literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum are very good. The curriculum is well integrated and pupils develop their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills very effectively through subjects such as science, history, design and technology, religious education and PSHCE.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well due to well matched and challenging activities;
- Teaching is of a consistently high standard;
- Subject management is a strength;
- The quality of marking could be better.

Commentary

67. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. For the current pupils in Year 2 or Year 4, there are no significant differences in the achievements of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented, achieve very well by Year 4. Pupils achieve so well because they show an excellent attitude towards their work, behave exceptionally well and the quality of teaching is of a consistently high standard. Teachers plan in some considerable detail appropriate activities for the full ability range in each class by setting work at different levels. This ensures pupils understand what they are doing and make very good progress. Higher attaining pupils achieve very well because teachers set different tasks for them at suitably challenging levels. New learning targets are shared with pupils so that they are aware of what they are supposed to know and do by the end of the lesson. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and this motivates pupils to remain fully focused on the tasks set. All pupils enjoy an excellent relationship with staff and this helps to create an excellent ethos for learning.
68. Although the number of pupils taking the National Curriculum tests in Year 2 is relatively small and there were some pupils with special educational needs included, very high standards were sustained from 2001 through to 2003. In 2004, standards in the national tests were well above average and inspection evidence shows that they will be maintained at this level in 2005, with every pupil achieving the expected level and about a third attaining the higher Level 3. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, receive very good support from class teachers and teaching assistants, enabling them to achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.
69. The very good quality of teaching ensures that all pupils continue to achieve very well. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in Year 4 are achieving standards which are well above average. Detailed assessment information shows that all pupils in Year 4 are on course to attain Level 3 by the end of the year, and well over half the higher Level 4. This is the level normally expected for pupils in Year 6, another two years away. If all meet the targets expected of them, well over half of the pupils will attain Level 4 and standards will be very high.
70. Staff know their pupils exceptionally well and have the highest expectations of pupils' behaviour which encourages the excellent attitudes pupils have to the subject. Enthusiastic teaching of the highest calibre ensures that pupils in Year 1 successfully build on the very positive start they have in the Foundation Stage, through a range of practically based activities. They are keen to count, add and subtract with increasing accuracy. There is a very good emphasis on the teaching of basic number skills and all enjoy solving problems associated with time. The playful interaction between the teacher and teaching assistant introduces an element of fun. Pupils were quick to spot the deliberate mistakes made by the teaching assistant when demonstrating and, as a result, all knew precisely what was expected of them when they started to work. Year 2 pupils use computers confidently, for example to support work on changing money and recognising coins. Their previous work shows that they have a very good knowledge of addition and subtraction with numbers up to

and sometimes beyond 100, can identify and name basic fractions and know how to tell the time. In a very good lesson in Year 3, pupils used computers effectively to help them handle data when trying to complete missing numbers on an attendance sheet for the local leisure centre. Teacher knowledge, enthusiasm and the pace of the lesson were key strengths, along with carefully matched tasks for pupils of different ability levels. All teachers mark pupils' work carefully. However, some miss the opportunity to give older pupils written evaluative comments on how to further improve their work.

71. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Like all other subjects, mathematics has benefited from the same subject leader being in post for a number of years. Discussions show that staff work closely together and frequently discuss pupils' progress in the subject. The co-ordinator regularly completes observations of teachers' planning and undertakes a careful scrutiny of pupils' completed work. Senior managers and governors are all routinely involved in observing teaching and learning in all classes, with a view to sharing good practice and identifying any aspects which need improving. Assessment is very good and individual targets are set for pupils. As a result, they know how well they are achieving and what their future targets are. The high profile of mathematics in the school and the determination shown by all staff to continually refine and improve has resulted in improved provision since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. Mathematics is used very well in a variety of ways in many other subjects and this enables pupils to make good use of their mathematical skills. For example, pupils measure and record temperatures in science, and in geography draw plans and calculate the time between volcanic eruptions. There are good opportunities and a range of mathematical programs for pupils to use ICT to further enhance their skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the age of 7 and well above those expected by the age of 9;
- Pupil achievement is very good;
- Teaching is very good throughout the school;
- The use of investigative skills is a strong feature of the curriculum;
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

73. Standards throughout have remained well above average since the last inspection, thanks to the high quality teaching received by all pupils. From below average levels of ability on entry to the school, detailed tracking of pupils' progress shows that all make rapid progress and their level of achievement is very good at the ages of 7 and 9. Pupils receive extremely well planned tasks and show much interest in the subject. In the national tests for 7-year-olds, teacher assessments for science last year showed that half of all pupils were attaining at the higher Level 3. This was well above average.
74. Teaching continues to reflect the very high quality seen at the time of the last inspection. All teaching observed was very good, with some excellent features. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and their lessons are well planned and prepared and contain a variety of stimulating activities with very good resources. Pace is brisk, expectations are very high and pupils of all abilities are given appropriate work and support with a degree of challenge. In a Year 2 lesson, the teaching practically and skilfully linked the topic of 'Forces' to the design

of a car mat for the nursery. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson on the same topic, very effective teaching totally captivated the pupils and made the subject exciting. Teachers provide very good opportunities for all pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and are careful to model and reinforce key scientific words and concepts. A good example of this was seen in a highly effective summary at the end of a lesson involving Year 1 pupils who were investigating materials suitable for umbrellas. Marking is regularly undertaken and pupils receive lots of praise in supportive comments from teachers for their written work. Marking could be further improved in some cases for older pupils if teachers added more developmental comments on their work, clearly showing how it could be improved.

75. Pupils are given a very good early grounding in developing investigative skills and often conduct experiments working independently in groups. They can record the results of their investigations appropriately, including effective use of ICT. Year 1 pupils are aware of fair testing issues and the need to make predictions about the outcome of their simple experiments. This develops throughout their time in school, so that in Year 3 and 4 pupils are capable of making relatively sophisticated hypotheses and testing them out in controlled experiments. They use well above average thinking and deductive skills to offer explanations for the outcomes they observe and to make suggestions as to how experiments might be modified to produce different results.
76. Science is very well led and managed. Teaching and standards of work are thoroughly monitored and assessment systems are thorough. The co-ordinator has excellent subject knowledge and provides very good information and support for colleagues throughout the school. As a result, science is a well taught subject and high standards are successfully being maintained.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now above those expected;
- Leadership and management of ICT is very good and has significantly contributed to the rise in standards;
- The contribution of ICT in the learning of other subjects is good.

Commentary

77. Standards were judged to be in line with those expected at the ages of 7 and 9 at the previous inspection. They are now above those expected throughout and pupils' achievement is good. This is the result of improved resources and quality of teaching, and the careful integration of ICT into the school's planning and practice. All pupils have good access to computer facilities, with a mini-suite located close to all classes and a lap top trolley available as well as class computers. The school has also benefited from the very recent installation of interactive whiteboards in every classroom. Teachers are already making good use of these in the effective delivery of their lessons, and are beginning training to fully exploit their potential.
78. The youngest pupils have good keyboard and mouse skills for their age and confidently use simple programs. They save, retrieve and print their work quickly and competently. In a Year 2 class on controlling the movement and direction of a programmable toy, the teacher's clear explanation and practical demonstration enabled pupils to learn well and have good opportunities to practise their newly acquired skills. Following the expert lesson delivery by their teacher, a Year 4 class used a sophisticated graphics software package with considerable skill towards completing a specified task. They displayed a maturity in their appreciation of the computer as a tool and a single mindedness in reaching their goals well above that expected for pupils in this age group.

79. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator's expertise, subject knowledge and effectiveness in constructing, delivering and monitoring a plan for improvement are significant factors in the subject's success.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to use ICT in lessons from the moment they enter the school. As a result, using a computer becomes increasingly well integrated into the learning process for all pupils as they move through the school. Pupils store their work in individual files electronically, which grow into impressive portfolios as they progress through the school. There are many good examples of the use of ICT in all subjects, for word processing and data handling, and older pupils, when interviewed, gave examples of how they use ICT to research topics. Internet websites are used well to find out about deserts, rivers and mountains of the world in geography or characters such as Bede in history.

HUMANITIES

81. Too few lessons were seen in **history** or **geography** to make a judgement about the overall quality of provision in these subjects. However, under the guidance of the headteacher, there has been a process of continuous improvement since the previous inspection, with staff working very effectively as a team. Subject management was reported as a strength in the previous inspection and management procedures have been further strengthened since then. In geography and history, an annual action plan is drawn up and governors, as well as teachers, help to evaluate it. There are very good assessment procedures in place to monitor and thoroughly evaluate standards. The quality of teaching is evaluated regularly through lesson observations and examining pupils completed work. As a result, the standard of pupils completed work is generally above that normally seen throughout and reflects the high quality of teaching as well as pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour.
82. A scrutiny of pupils' completed work in geography and displays of topic work around the school show that teachers' excellent planning enables pupils of all ability levels to be provided with interesting and challenging tasks. In Year 2, pupils have produced an incredible amount of work, studying the local area in depth, recognising house styles, analysing the features and services in their community and gaining a good knowledge of maps, the countries of the United Kingdom and compass directions. There is evidence of good progress as pupils move up through the school. Pupils in Year 3 successfully develop their mapping skills, producing street plans, using map symbols to create a map of a treasure island and researching information on the capital cities of the world. Year 4 use aerial photographs well to identify geographical features and world maps to locate mountains, rivers, cities and deserts. All pupils make satisfactory use of computers to record work or conduct research about places of interest.
83. In history, there was a shortage of work to examine in Year 2, as geography was the main focus subject last term. However, teachers' planning shows that the subject is covered effectively by a series of historical topics in the infant classes. Year 3 have a good knowledge about invaders and settlers in Britain, such as the Roman and Anglo-Saxons. A visit to Sutton Hoo, a Saxon burial mound and research about Bede and Pagans, for example, ensures that all pupils have a good understanding of the lifestyle and conditions for people in this era. Carefully displayed work, such as the story of King Beowulf, adds interest for pupils. In their topic work, pupils make effective use of their literacy and computing skills. Year 4 use computers often to produce their written work and Year 3 learn the correct terminology when studying the life of Bede. All know terms such as vellum and a monks habit and its cowl. Most competently research facts from the Internet, for example the Runic alphabet and facts about Vikings. Resources for history are very good, with the school's own posters and artefacts being supplemented by making good use of a local resource centre.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement and standards are good with some very good features;
- The subject is well managed;
- A newly agreed syllabus has been successfully implemented in a short space of time.

Commentary

84. Standards in religious education have been sustained since the last inspection and in Years 2 and 4 are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In spite of the short time scale since the introduction of the newly agreed syllabus in July 2004, long-term plans following its requirements are now securely in place. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that coverage of topics is good. The whole staff have worked hard as a team to ensure pupils successfully build on their knowledge in a carefully planned way as they move through the school. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development, as pupils learn to understand and appreciate the differences between the major religions of the world, such as Hinduism.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the two lessons observed, teaching was very good. In Year 1 where pupils were learning about important events in their lives, some inspired teaching helped pupils to appreciate the concept of the baptism ceremony and the symbolism involved. A very well taught Year 2 lesson similarly developed pupils' religious thinking as they looked at the story of the 'Good Samaritan' and translated the message or moral of the story to their own lives. They were effectively encouraged to reflect on and learn from values in the Christian religion, such as caring and support for the less fortunate. Pupils in Year 3 had created a 'thought map' of Hindu and Islamic festivals and this clearly demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of Ramadan and Diwali.
86. The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator has monitored its effectiveness through pupil interviews, lesson observation and work scrutiny. She has led the staff in implementing the main changes in the new Northumberland scheme and ensured they now have more resources, books and artefacts to support their teaching. She is currently looking at assessment systems and has clearly identified the next steps in improving the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

87. In **art and design, design and technology, music** and **physical education** too few lessons were seen during the inspection to make a reliable judgement on the overall quality of provision, standards or the quality of teaching in each subject.
88. Only one art and design lesson was seen. From this lesson and from work seen around the school and in portfolios it is obvious that a high value is placed on art and design. This is evident from the very good displays of interesting work around the school, both in classes and shared areas. Pupils use a variety of materials and techniques in their work, showing a high degree of success in observational drawing, colour blending, collage work, composition, printing and painting. Teacher expectations are high. This was demonstrated in a Year 1 lesson, when pupils' skills in observational drawing were very well developed as they successfully performed the challenging task of drawing a daffodil. The portfolio of pupils' work compiled by the co-ordinator clearly shows a wide variety of tasks, fully covering the requirements of the national curriculum.

89. In design and technology, one very good lesson was observed. From this and from work seen around the school, as well as a discussion with the experienced and knowledgeable subject co-ordinator, it is evident that pupils are given a good range of experiences. They have lots of opportunities to plan, choose materials, make, evaluate and further improve their work. Good links are made with other curriculum areas in all classes, ranging from literacy to science. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 were able to make links to their work in science as they discussed air resistance, balanced forces and friction when making land yachts. Thorough planning by all teachers ensures pupils successfully build on their previous learning. They are encouraged to work with care and precision when constructing models, some with moving parts. The curricular provision is further enhanced by the work being done on the 'Banner' with the local community group.
90. In music, one lesson was observed in Year 3 which featured African music. All pupils achieved very well and demonstrated very good skills for their age in their solo and group performances, using voices and xylophones. They showed very good understanding of pulse, tempo and pace and were able to invent and develop melodic ideas. The quality of their relationships, the degree of co-operation between themselves and their teacher and their levels of enthusiasm and application were of a very high standard. The expertise, planning and high expectations of the teacher and her ability to instil confidence in all pupils were key to the success of the lesson.
91. There are good opportunities for all pupils to take part in well received Harvest and Christmas concerts and for Year 4 pupils to collaborate with a local upper school on a musical project. Pupils experience visits from orchestras and other performing artists. Better use could be made of opportunities to use music in school assemblies to stimulate, set the tone or as part of the assembly theme.
92. Music is very well led and managed by the headteacher. Resources have been further improved since the last inspection with more multicultural instruments and computer software available. Guidance, support and planning for the remaining non-specialist staff are very good.
93. In physical education, three lessons were seen, two featuring gymnastics and one games skills. This subject, like all others, is very well managed and taught by a highly skilled teaching staff who enjoy excellent relationships with pupils. When the partnership of local schools decided to focus on improving assessment procedures in physical education, for example, this aspect had already been a school priority and the very good procedures were shared. In the lessons seen, pupils were enthusiastic and behaved exceptionally well. The range of opportunities is effectively supplemented with a very good range of extra-curricular activities and frequent contact with other local schools for sporting events. Teachers' extremely detailed planning shows all aspects of the curriculum are covered throughout the year, including swimming. In the games skills with Year 1 pupils, the quality of teaching was excellent. The teacher had high expectations of the pupils, as they developed their bouncing and dribbling skills with a large ball. Excellent relationships were enhanced with an element of fun as the teaching assistant was asked to demonstrate and deliberately made mistakes. Pupils were quick to put her right. This ensured that when it was the pupils' turn, all knew exactly what to do! In the Year 2 and 4 gymnastics lesson, younger pupils were able to hold a balance position using three, two or one point of contact. In their lesson, Year 4 pupils developed a short sequence as they moved into and then out of a balance position, showing good control and co-ordination. Teaching was good in these lessons. The pace in Year 2 was slowed as pupils were asked to do a written evaluation of one another's performance. In Year 4, pupils described each other's performance but there was insufficient emphasis on evaluating how it could be improved further. Pupils benefit from the good range of resources, the spacious hard play areas, well equipped adventure play area and a large level field.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

94. Too few lessons were seen in **personal, social and health education and citizenship** (PSHCE) to make a judgement about provision.
95. Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection were full of praise for the way the school helps pupils to develop both socially and academically. Carefully formulated policies and detailed planning shows that the school places much importance on promoting pupils' personal and social skills and their awareness of citizenship. The school is also successfully developing 'Thinking Skills' as a curriculum area. An example of this was seen in Year 1, as pupils shared their thoughts and news items with one another prior to an assembly. The session also provided pupils with a good opportunity to extend their speaking and listening skills, a school priority for improvement this year. Current initiatives, such as developing a new pupil council, are further enhancing pupils' sense of responsibility. It is hoped that, through this, pupils' views can be heard and they will be encouraged to play their part in the day-to-day organisation of the school.
96. Clear and effective policies exist for the promotion of pupils' awareness about racial equality, and drugs and for their sex education and relationships. The school is very good at teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe and well; for example, all are taught about the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle. The two school assemblies taught pupils how to share and appreciate kindness and all about Shrove Tuesday. They make a significant contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. However, insufficient time was provided for pupils to reflect on the messages during assemblies and better use could have been made of music, especially to accompany singing.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	1
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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