

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **ROTHBURY FIRST SCHOOL**

Rothbury,

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122221

Headteacher: Mrs D Butler

Lead inspector: Mr Chris Quigley

Dates of inspection: 29 November – 1 December 2004

Inspection number: 267591

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	85
School address:	Morpeth Northumberland
Postcode:	NE65 7PG
Telephone number:	01669 620283
Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Owen
Date of previous inspection:	26 April 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Rothbury First School is a smaller than average school in rural Northumberland. It caters for pupils aged 3 to 9, after which they transfer to the middle school sector. There are 85 pupils on roll, which includes 12 part time nursery children. The school serves the local community from a wide range of social backgrounds. All pupils are from a White British background and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average. A much lower than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs but the proportion who have statements of special educational needs match the national average. There are three classes and a part-time nursery. When children start nursery their attainment is slightly below the national expectation. The school is involved with the healthy schools award initiative. The headteacher has a full-time teaching commitment.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
32507	Mr C Quigley	Lead inspector	Mathematics, Information and Communication Technology, geography, history, art and design, music
9572	Mrs K Anderson	Lay inspector	
12908	Mr D Halford	Team inspector	English, science, design and technology, personal, social, health and citizenship education, physical education, religious education
30781	Mrs W Richardson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage of learning

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Rothbury First School provides a **good standard of education**. Standards in the basic skills are above the national expectation and all pupils achieve well. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and their parents are pleased with the education that the school provides. The headteacher and governors lead the school well and teaching is consistently good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and art and design are above average and all pupils achieve well in these subjects.
- The headteacher, along with other key staff and governors, leads the school well
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and teachers make good provision for classes who have pupils from different year groups.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their good basic skills in other subjects.
- Although the quality of marking and feedback is satisfactory, they do not give pupils enough advice as to how to improve their work.

The school was last inspected in April 1999 and has made sound progress since that time. Above average standards have been maintained and issues relating to the curriculum for religious education have been successfully addressed. All pupils now achieve well and there are no signs of any pupils making unsatisfactory progress. The curriculum is more balanced.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.** When children start school in the Nursery, their attainment is slightly below the expected level for three year olds. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception, which continues throughout the school. This helps pupils to attain high standards in national tests in Year 2. Results of the Year 2 tests in mathematics have risen well over the past three years from an average level to well above average. Although test levels for 2004 are well above average, pupils' day-to day work is not quite so high in the current Year 2 class. Although pupils in Year 4 do not take national tests, their attainment remains above average and they achieve well.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall.** Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and this helps them to achieve well. They are keen to come to school and **attendance and behaviour are good**.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education overall is good. A satisfactory curriculum helps pupils to gain a sound grounding in a wide range of subjects and there is good provision to enrich pupils' experiences in the arts. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their good basic skills in other areas. The good care for pupils helps them to feel secure and this helps them to have the confidence to participate in all activities well. **The quality of teaching is consistently good.** Teachers have a good command of the subjects they teach and their planning meets the needs of all pupils well. Teachers work especially hard to ensure pupils in mixed year group classes get the right level of work. As a result, all pupils achieve well. Although teachers mark work regularly, marking and feedback do not give pupils enough advice as to how to improve their work.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, key staff and governors are good.** Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they work in good partnership with the headteacher in shaping its direction. The headteacher has created an effective team in this small school and, as a result, key staff have a good understanding of what the school does well and how it needs to develop. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is a good reflection of its strengths and weaknesses. Together, the headteacher and key staff have maintained above average standards since the last inspection.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the work of the school. They are positive about the way in which the school cares for their children and how the school is run. Pupils do not have a great deal of responsibilities but they are happy to be in school and enjoy the activities the school provides. Parents are happy with the progress their children make and although some would like more information about this, the school provides an adequate amount of good quality information.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and art and design so that they match the above average levels in these subjects by planning more opportunities for pupils to apply their good basic skills in these subjects
- Improve the quality of feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve their work.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and art and design and pupils of all abilities achieve well. In other subjects, standards match national expectations but pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their good basic skills in these subjects.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science and art and design, where standards are above average
- Pupils' descriptive writing is especially good
- Pupils have a good knowledge of number facts and they have well developed mental strategies for calculating
- The level of sophistication in pupils' portraits is impressive and as a result, pupils attain above average levels in art and design

### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.5 ( 16.5 )	15.8 ( 15.7 )
writing	17.2 ( 17.1 )	14.6 ( 14.6 )
mathematics	18.3 ( 17.3 )	16.2 ( 16.3 )

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

1. Pupils take national tests in this school in Year 2 only. In 2004, results were well above the average attained in other schools nationally. Over the past three years, results have been gradually rising in reading and mathematics, whilst the school has maintained high standards in writing. In reading, writing and mathematics, all pupils attained the expected level for their age (Level 2) and higher than average proportions achieved Level three. In science, there are no tests and so teachers look at pupils' work over a period of time. These teacher assessments show that pupils attain standards above the national expectation. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. When children start school in the Nursery, their attainment is slightly below the expected level for three year olds. They make good progress throughout Nursery and Reception and this continues throughout the school. By the end of Foundation Stage, children's attainment matches the expectation for their age. By the time they are in Year 2, standards of work in pupils' books are above the expected level for the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, and this continues in Years 3 and 4. The most able pupils are challenged well and this helps them to achieve their best. In lessons, teachers provide them with challenging work and they are encouraged to try out ideas. Pupils who are less able or who have special educational needs have effective support and they achieve well. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, standards in English, mathematics, science and art and design are above the national expectation, and pupils maintain good levels of achievement throughout their time at Rothbury. This is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection.
2. Standards in pupils' writing are particularly impressive in Years 3 and 4. This is because firm foundations have been established in earlier year groups. Pupils have produced some very



good pieces of descriptive writing about cats, using adventurous words and phrases such as: *'Buildings, towering over the small figure, seemed to be wobbling in the moonlight air,'* and, *'The curious cat edged his way along the winding alley way. All around, leaves were as cold as hanging icicles on the vicious thorn trees.'*

3. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is above the national expectation. This is largely due to their good knowledge of number facts, which they use well to derive new information. For example, pupils in Year 2 use doubles of smaller numbers, such as double five to work out double 50. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a good understanding of pairs of numbers that make 10 and use this to help them work out quickly, pairs of numbers that make 100.
4. Some very good examples of pupils' portraits hang on the display boards around school. Pupils have a good understanding of line and tone and develop good drawing and painting skills. This results in impressive, life-like pieces. Some pieces contain effective tactile qualities and others use careful brush strokes to create the effect of movement well. This is a key feature of art and design in the school and pupils attain standards that are above expectations for their age.
5. Despite pupils' good writing and number skills, there are very few opportunities to apply and develop them in other subjects. For example, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their good mathematics or writing skills in geography; they do not have adequate opportunity to develop communication skills in physical education and they have few opportunities to develop their good writing skills in design and technology. This has resulted in standards, which although satisfactory, do not match those in English and mathematics. Teachers do not plan sufficiently for the use of language and literacy or mathematics across the curriculum. There are many missed opportunities for pupils to gain a greater understanding of how to use their good basic skills. For example, in geography and science, the opportunity to use graphs, charts and tables is often missed. Pupils' books show very little evidence of a range of writing styles being used to develop a greater understanding of subjects. For example, in design and technology there are missed opportunities to use labelled diagrams, recount, instructions, recipes and reports.

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

Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Pupils have **very good** attitudes to school and behaviour is **good**. **The social and moral development of pupils are good and their spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory.**

### **Strengths**

- Pupils clearly enjoy school and the attendance rate is high
- The majority of pupils have very good attitudes to learning and this helps them to achieve well
- Relationships are very good

### **Commentary**

6. Attendance rates are good and have been consistently well above the national figures for several years. There have been some unauthorised absences in the last year and as this is a small school, where one pupil can affect the figures greatly, the attendance rate is lower than usual. This does not reflect the very good rate of attendance the school usually experiences.
7. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time and eager to start work. They enter into work and play activities with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils take pleasure in talking to visitors about their school. Most settle down to their lessons quickly and sensibly, although a small minority of older pupils do not have such positive attitudes. Pupils approach tasks willingly

and work well in groups, pairs or on their own. They answer questions with confidence and listen quietly whilst others are speaking. When given the opportunity, they carry out responsibilities in class and show a good level of independence in lessons. This helps them to achieve well.

8. The moral and social development of pupils are good. They understand the school rules. They know how adults expect them to behave and usually do so well. In lessons, most behave very well. Staff support expertly those with learning difficulties and this helps them to achieve well. There is an atmosphere of calm when moving between lessons although the lining up routine at the end of break times is not always orderly and pupils take time to quieten down after play. Lunchtimes are sociable events. When given the opportunity, pupils carry out responsibilities well. However, at present, these opportunities are limited. All pupils are fully included in the school community regardless of ability or gender. Although the spiritual and cultural development of pupils are satisfactory, there are some good features: The positive ethos that pervades the school enables pupils to feel good about themselves, grow in confidence and respect others. They have learnt about Islam and have celebrated Chinese New Year as well as taking part in Christingle services in their local church. As a result, they are beginning to appreciate the beliefs and traditions of others. Pupils demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves by supporting charities.
9. Relationships are very good. Isolated incidents of unkindness are taken seriously by staff and usually resolved effectively. At break times, pupils enjoy playing together in the playground and they learn to care for each other well. Some of the older pupils support new starters during mealtimes and play times and so help them to settle into the school routine quickly.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	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.*

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are consistently good, and the school has developed good links with parents. Pupils are well cared for in this safe school and they receive good guidance and support.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching, learning and assessment are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and assistants have a good range of effective methods that cater for the wide range of abilities in mixed year group classes. As a result, all pupils achieve well
- Teaching is effective because of the good use of information about pupils' past achievements which is used well to plan for future work
- Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to work together and this makes learning particularly effective
- Pupils are not given enough advice as to how to improve their work

### **Commentary**

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	13	1	0	0	0

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

10. One of the most distinctive features of this small school is that pupils are taught in classes with pupils from different year groups with a wide range of abilities. Teachers and their assistants use a good range of effective teaching strategies to make sure that all pupils' needs are met. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in the Years 3 and 4 class, the temporary teacher directed questions about time to the different ability groups and gave good opportunities for pupils to discuss answers with each other. Meanwhile, the assistant made sure that pupils were supported, asking supplementary questions at well-chosen points throughout the lesson. The most able pupils in each class are challenged well and those with special educational needs have good levels of support. As a result, all pupils achieve well. This is a sound improvement since the last inspection, when there were some instances of more able pupils underachieving.
11. Teachers plan carefully and effectively. They have a good understanding of most of the subjects they teach. This is especially the case for English, mathematics, science, and art and design, where standards are above the expected level in each class. All staff are particularly good at encouraging pupils to try their very best by providing interesting activities to keep them motivated. For example, in a good music lesson in the Years 1 and 2 class, the teacher provided a good warm up activity of short songs which immediately captured the interest of all pupils. In a good mathematics lesson in the Reception and Year 1 class, the teacher used counting songs to involve all children from the very start of the lesson. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of 'talk time', which gives pupils good opportunities to discuss answers with their classmates before answering. This is effective and leads to high levels of participation from all pupils. In lessons that are less effective, teacher talk dominates at the expense of pupil talk and there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop understanding through discussion. Good leadership of teaching by the headteacher and other key staff has led to teachers having a good understanding of their own strengths and areas for development and, as a result, achievement levels for all pupils are high.
12. Teachers and assistants know pupils well. The information about their past achievements is used to plan effective lessons and projects that take pupils forward at a good rate. As a result, all pupils achieve well. This is particularly so in English and mathematics lessons, where good quality information from tests and pieces of work give teachers a very clear picture of what pupils need to do next. All teachers are involved in looking at the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' performance and they work well to tackle any relative weaknesses. This is a good element of leadership of subjects and of the school by the headteacher. However, it is not done as well in subjects other than English and mathematics.
13. A strong and effective feature of the teaching is the way in which teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to collaborate in lessons. This is a good strategy that allows pupils to use the information the teacher has given them to discuss and develop ideas. Pupils, who have very good attitudes to learning, rise to this challenge extremely well and, as a result, they are productive and give of their best to lessons. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson in the Years 1 and 2 class, pupils worked in groups to solve problems involving money. They listened well to each other and suggested ideas that they then tried out. Every pupil in this lesson applied themselves to their full capabilities and there was a strong sense of achievement. The way in which all staff involve pupils in working with each other is a result of the strong team with a clear sense of direction that the headteacher has developed. This has been done well whilst maintaining a full time teaching commitment.

14. Although teachers mark work on a regular basis, they rely too heavily on ticks, crosses and phrases such as 'well done'. This does not help pupils to understand why their work is good or what they need to do to improve. This is because, at the planning stage, teachers do not consider effectively, what they are looking for in a piece of work. In lessons, the main intention of what pupils will learn is explained clearly. However, explanations do not describe to pupils how they will know if their piece of work is of a good quality. As a result, feedback – both verbal and in written form - does not adequately help pupils to move forward. The use of learning targets for pupils is not yet developed adequately, although the school has recently introduced a satisfactory system in mathematics. This means that pupils do not have an awareness of how they will improve over a period of time.

## **The curriculum**

Overall, the curriculum is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills. However, there are insufficient opportunities to use these skills in other subjects.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs across the whole school is good
- Visits and expert visitors enrich the curriculum well
- The curriculum for the youngest children is good.

## **Commentary**

15. Over recent years, the school has focused appropriately on developing pupils' skills in English, mathematics and science, which has resulted in pupils attaining above average standards in these subjects. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop and apply these skills in the rest of the curriculum. This has led to lower standards in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and art and design.
16. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children benefit from experiencing a wide range of stimulating and well-organised challenges. As a result, children achieve well and attain standards that match the national expectation by the time they leave the reception class.
17. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, across the whole school, is good. Pupils are given work that meets their needs and are supported well in lessons by able classroom assistants. Because of this, they achieve well. Despite some parental concern that external agencies are slow to act upon referrals, the school does everything it can to provide the best possible education for these pupils.
18. A good range of visits, visitors and first-hand experiences enriches the curriculum and the school works hard to ensure that all pupils are included in the curriculum. The school is working well in its quest to be designated a Healthy School and has reached the standard many areas of the award.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school has **good** provision for the care, welfare and health and safety of its pupils. Staff provide **good** support, advice and guidance for pupils. Involvement of pupils by seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good procedures ensure that pupils work in a safe environment
- Relationships are very good
- Personal support is good but pupils do not always get enough academic guidance
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to give their views about the development of the school

### **Commentary**

19. The school makes every effort to ensure that pupils work in a safe environment. Good procedures are in place to ensure the best possible care of pupils and regular checks are made to ensure any risks are dealt with effectively.
20. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. There are daily opportunities for the exchange of information between staff and parents. As a result, teachers know their pupils well and are sensitive to their varying needs and situations. Pupils know whom to turn to for help. Parents are particularly pleased with the level of care their children receive. This good support and guidance has a positive impact upon pupils' personal development but there is insufficient guidance to pupils as to how to improve their academic work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good guidance and support they receive in their individual education plans.
21. Opportunities for pupils to play a part in shaping their school are limited at present. There is no school council or formal system for seeking pupils' views but class teachers ask the views of pupils from time to time in an informal manner.

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

This school has established **good** links with its parents, the community and with other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are pleased with the school and have good relationships with staff
- Parents make a positive contribution to the school
- The school has developed good links with the community
- Effective links with other schools help staff to provide a good quality of education.

### **Commentary**

22. The school is held in high regard by parents, who enjoy a good relationship with staff. As almost all parents come into school at the beginning and end of the day there are good opportunities for them to voice concerns, express views and exchange information. In the past, parents' views have been sought about, for example, the provision of after school care and the introduction of uniforms. However, currently there are no formal arrangements for consulting parents and a minority feel that their views and suggestions are not heard.
23. Parents make a positive contribution to the school. The Friends of Rothbury is extremely active and successful in organising fundraising and social events. The proceeds benefit pupils. For example, they have helped fund the conservatory building, purchase of

playground toys and staging for the hall. Some of the support staff now working in the school originally began their involvement by taking advantage of the 'helping in school' training course they were offered. Others help with, for example, the recorder group or with baking, and many are willing to assist with trips and events. Through the prospectus, the annual governors' report and frequent newsletters, parents receive good information about what is going on in school. Parents receive guidance about ways they can help their children with both reading and their homework. As a result, they are actively involved in their child's learning. However, there is a perception amongst some parents that they do not receive sufficient information about their child's progress. The school needs to address this concern.

24. The school has developed good links with the community, which it uses well to enhance the curriculum and extend pupils' learning. Visits to nearby Cragside House, the library, church, Jubilee Hall and the local shops all form good local links and increase pupils' knowledge of the community. The community also make good use of the school premises
25. Because links with other schools are well established there are good opportunities for staff from all the local schools to meet together on a regular basis. This gives them the chance to exchange views and share ideas. Recent work with the 'Valley schools' has been useful in training and curriculum planning. Partnerships with other small schools have enabled them to take advantage of good support services. Good transition arrangements are in place with the middle school. Every effort is made to ensure that transfer goes as smoothly as possible. Pupils are offered good opportunities to visit their new school, meet their new teachers, and get to know their new surroundings. Staff meet to discuss academic and personal needs.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are all **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- This is a school that knows itself well. As a result, it manages improvement effectively.
- The headteacher has developed an effective team and balances a full-time teaching commitment with leading and managing the school well.
- Governors know the school well and work in good partnership with the headteacher in providing clear direction.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and, as a result, they achieve well
- The school's finances are managed well and, as a result, the school achieves good value for money

### **Commentary**

26. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher and other key staff have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and day-to day management is well targeted to deal with the weaknesses, whilst maintaining the strengths.
27. The headteacher has a clear vision and a strong sense of purpose, which is shared with all staff and is directed towards the drive to maintain high standards in important areas of the school's work. This is done well whilst maintaining a full-time teaching commitment. The school development plan focuses clearly on appropriate priorities for improvement. Objectives are clear, simple and explicit and indicate how improvement will be managed and how its effectiveness will be measured. Management of the school is good. The school day runs smoothly and all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The appraisal of teachers' performance is linked appropriately to their training needs and to priorities identified in the school's improvement plan.

28. Governance of the school is good and is helping to shape the direction of the school. Governors support the headteacher and staff well. They have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the schools and the aids and barriers to learning. They ensure that statutory responsibilities are met.
29. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. In this inclusive school, every child matters. A well-planned budget is used to ensure that all pupils achieve well. Pupils who have individual education plans make good progress in their learning as the plans reflect their needs well. Partnerships with external agencies are good and help pupils who require more specialist support and parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about their progress.
30. Finances are managed well. This is a small school and although the balance carried forward to the next financial year is a higher percentage than is normal, the amount of money involved is not excessive. The school has retained this money to finance refurbishments, and to maintain staffing levels. The good approach to financial management helps the school to meet its educational objectives and maintain its staffing levels. The budget is managed prudently. Governors use information about pupils' performance well to assess the effectiveness of their spending.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	238 936	Balance from previous year	49 049
Total expenditure	241 089	Balance carried forward to the next	46 895
Expenditure per pupil	2 274		

In the light of the budget, the high standards pupils have maintained over several years and the school's overall performance in managing and using the resources available to it, the school gives good value for money.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE (Nursery and Reception)**

31. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and this is a similar position to that found at the last inspection. Children are prepared well for transfer to Year 1. The children enter nursery in the year they have their fourth birthday and start in the main school in the September before they are five. Reception children are taught in a mixed year group class with the Year 1 pupils. Pre-school provision is available in the toddler group and pre-school playgroup held in the school on a weekly basis. All children achieve well because the teaching is good and the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide interesting and relevant activities, which are generally well matched to their needs.
32. All adults are good role models for the children and manage them well. The nursery teacher and reception class teacher work well as a team with the classroom assistants and children with special educational needs receive good support, which means they achieve well. The majority of children achieve a satisfactory level in knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1 but the teaching of early reading and writing is not sufficiently challenging particularly for the more able children. The accommodation inside is spacious but outside facilities are unable to be used at present due to building work.

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

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

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

- Children show good levels of independence in choosing and carrying out activities
- Supportive relationships ensure that the children are confident and happy
- Good opportunities for personal development are carefully planned

#### **Commentary**

33. The personal, social and emotional development of children is at the expected level by the time they enter reception class. This is because high expectations of social behaviour in nursery mean that children soon learn to respect each other and to take turns and share their toys. Children in the nursery already know the routines, self-registering, listening to instructions, working at their tasks, tidying up, and behaving well. This good start means by the time they are in reception, children are good at moving sensibly between the various activities planned for them. They concentrate well even when not directly supervised and listen attentively.
34. Teaching is good. Teachers plan carefully and clear targets for promoting personal and social skills are identified. This ensures that children make good progress and achieve well. This works effectively, as the majority of children are at the level expected and a small number exceed this level by the end of the reception year. When children do not conform they are dealt with firmly and fairly so that they learn to appreciate the needs of others within the group. Very supportive relationships ensure children feel confident to seek help when required. The continual reinforcement by adults, treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect, leads to trusting relationships.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop children's speaking and listening skills
- Reception children are well planned for in the mixed age class literacy lessons
- Children's understanding of letter sounds and names is below the expected level for their age

## **Commentary**

35. The majority of children meet the expectations in this area by the end of reception class. All adults working with children use questioning effectively to encourage children to develop spoken language. The good ratio of adults to children ensures that during activities, conversations promote the good use of language and extend vocabulary. All staff insist that children listen to the contribution of others. Very good relationships mean that children have the confidence to talk and describe what they are doing. Children enter nursery with language skills slightly below the level expected, particularly in spoken language. They make good progress and by the time they are in reception class are at the level expected for their age and a small number exceed this. Children in reception enjoy rhymes; they join in 'Baa baa black sheep' enthusiastically and are able to work out the order of jumbled phrases in the poem with adult help.
36. Achievement is satisfactory. Although children learn the sounds of letters well, they do not learn the names of letters. This leads to standards that are lower than the national expectation in matching sounds to letters. There are missed opportunities in the nursery class to begin learning the names of letter sounds especially for the more able children. The programme of teaching letters and sounds in reception is slow; as a result, the reception children are only confident in reading and writing six letters of the alphabet. Some children in reception class are at an early stage of reading but have a limited knowledge of words frequently used in reading and are not yet able to work out three letter words by linking sounds and letters. They use, however, clues in the pictures to tackle unfamiliar words well. Basic handwriting is taught well and exercises to promote early pencil skills and joined writing develops good habits. Children achieve satisfactorily as the majority of pupils can describe their pictures so adults can write for them but there is little evidence of children writing simple words independently because of their limited knowledge of letters of the alphabet.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning which ensures children achieve well
- There are good resources to promote mathematical development

## **Commentary**

37. Children in reception learn to count to ten. They are taught effectively to use their fingers to work out one more or one less than a given number. The class teacher plans good questioning for both age groups in the Year 1 and reception class, which means that all children learn effectively in numeracy lessons. Children have a good knowledge of mathematical vocabulary: for example, bigger, smaller, more than, less than. The more able children in reception know a cube, square and a circle. Number rhymes and games in nursery and reception, together with opportunities to thread beads or use sorting activities, help to

promote counting well. Most children in reception are working at the level expected for their age and are making satisfactory progress towards the nationally agreed early learning goals. There are good resources in classrooms to support mathematical development. Nursery children who are more able can count to five, and some beyond. The majority of reception children can recite numbers to ten and all children know a range of number rhymes that they join in with enjoyment. Reception age children can recognise most numerals to ten and can count up to five objects by pointing to them. The more able children can count beyond this number. Teaching is good and this helps children to achieve well.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have very good opportunities to use computers
- Visitors to school enhance knowledge and understanding well
- There is limited use of the immediate environment to extend children's knowledge of the world outside school

### **Commentary**

38. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children achieve appropriately. A sound variety of activities within the classrooms stimulates children's curiosity and enhances their understanding of the world. Visitors share skills and experiences with the whole school, for example music workshops or the National Park warden, add to children's knowledge well. There are, however, a limited number of visits outside school. This means that the range of first hand experience is also limited. The farm visit to Morpeth by reception children is a good example of planning for knowledge and understanding of the world but this type of activity is underdeveloped.
39. There is very good use of computers and children in both nursery and reception were confidently using the mouse to click on rhyming activities or use the program 'Dazzle' to create their own graphic designs. Children can use the listening centres and talk about what they have heard. Most children attain standards at the level expected for their age by the end of their time in reception. No evidence was seen of activities that begin to prepare children for life in a multicultural society.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use is made of the hall for structured lessons of physical education for reception children
- There is normally a good outdoor area stocked with wheeled toys and other activities
- A good range of planned activities promote fine motor skills

### **Commentary**

40. Only one lesson of physical activity was seen during the inspection but the quality of teaching and learning was good. Children practised throwing and catching skills and the standards they

achieved were above the expected level. During the inspection, building works prevented access to the outdoor environment so no judgment can be made on provision for the development of large motor skills for nursery age children but sufficient evidence was seen to make a secure judgment on the teaching of fine motor skills, which are good. Children enter nursery below the level expected in this area of learning and make good progress throughout nursery and reception. Children in both nursery and reception develop their manipulative skills well by handling crayons, pencils, scissors, brushes and small construction equipment. They can sieve and pour sand, use containers to pour water from one to the other and use controls on computers and listening centres. There is a good range of large construction equipment to enhance further physical development but it was not in use at the time of the inspection.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good, which means that children are achieving well and reaching at the level expected for their age.
- A good range of planned opportunities support creative development
- The use of language is promoted through creative development

### **Commentary**

41. A good range of creative opportunities, for example in painting, drawing and role -play support this area of learning well. Children's creative development is at the level expected on entry to the reception class, which demonstrates good progress since starting nursery. Good teaching ensures that children have access to successfully planned activities but there is some underdevelopment in the use of structured play opportunities particularly in sand, water and the use of musical instruments to support the development of creative imagination. Children's artwork is lively and colourful and staff take time to display them well, which enhances children's self esteem. Role- play areas give good scope for children to act out real life or imaginary situations and play independently in these areas. Adults develop children's communication skills well during creative activities by effective intervention and questioning.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attain standards that are above average for their age, and all pupils achieve well throughout the school due, in no small measure, to their very good attitudes to learning
- Pupils achieve especially well in writing, and their skills are very good. Pupils also listen well and this helps them to make good progress.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, but teachers' feedback does not show pupils how to improve their work
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their developing literacy skills across the curriculum.

## Commentary

42. Since the time of the last inspection above average standards have been maintained. Test results in 2004 show that pupils in Year 2 attained standards that were well above average and this is also the case in the work that they produce on a day-to day basis. Although test results for 2004 show standards to be well above average, the current Year 2 class, in their day-to day work have above average attainment. This demonstrates good progress over time, as many pupils start school with levels of attainment that are slightly below average. Pupils' achievement, therefore, is good and considerably assisted by their very good attitudes to work.
43. Over time, a growing number of pupils become confident speakers who are able to articulate their ideas and feelings well. Throughout the school, pupils generally listen well. Effective strategies, such as encouraging pupils to discuss with their partners before coming to a decision, gives them good opportunities to express themselves. Achievement in writing is very good overall. By the end of Year 2, most pupils punctuate their work accurately and respond well to a range of writing tasks. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have many good opportunities to write for a wide variety of purposes. Detailed writing collecting information, tightly structured Haiku poems and descriptive writing about cats all demonstrate writing of very high quality. For example, *'The wild cat prowled proudly along the dark, gloomy alley, until he reached two tall buildings towering above him.'* Most pupils can delineate sentences using the common forms of punctuation to a good standard and a small number of pupils use more complex forms to clarify meaning. In general, pupils present written work carefully and well. They clearly take a pride in their work.
44. The school is working hard to maintain good standards of reading by placing a good emphasis on purposeful guided reading sessions and by developing the reading environment throughout the school. There is a well-stocked library with good displays which are clear and help pupils to select books appropriately. By the end of Year 4, pupils understand that there is a variety of reading skills and know when each is of relevance.
45. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is carefully monitored. This has a positive effect on not only the attainment of pupils with special educational needs, but also their confidence when teaching assistants support their learning. As a result, they learn well. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good, overall, and especially so when they are working in groups.
46. Throughout the school, teaching and learning in English are good. Teachers plan effectively and question pupils well. There is usually sufficient challenge to keep them working independently and productively. Teachers mark books regularly and conscientiously. They encourage pupils well. Feedback does not, however, inform pupils consistently enough of what they need to do next to improve their work.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. The school provides some good experiences for pupils to develop their basic skills in English lessons. Pupils make good use of ICT to gather information from the internet and from other sources to help them understand, for example, poetry. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their good literacy skills across other subjects of the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and all pupils achieve well, especially in mental calculations
- The quality of teaching is consistently good
- Although the marking of pupils' work is satisfactory, it does not give adequate guidance as to how to improve work.
- Good leadership has led to improvements over recent years
- Pupils apply their good mathematical skills well in daily mathematics lessons but there are missed opportunities to do this in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

48. All pupils attain standards that are above average. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of mental calculations and they use a range of known facts to derive new ones. For example, In a Year 2 lesson, pupils are asked to work out 20p add 20p. One pupil explains that the answer is 40p, because, '*2p plus 2p is 4p, so 20p plus 20p is 40p*'. Pupils also apply their good knowledge of place value to calculations and as a result, they rapidly work out answers. Pupils' books show a good understanding of measurement, informal calculation methods and a growing understanding of multiplication. In the national tests taken in Year 2 in 2004, pupils attained standards that were well above average. This has been a rising trend over the past three years and an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Year 4 show a good understanding of mental calculations and can solve problems such as 34 plus 95 rapidly. As with Year 2, pupils in Year 4 use known facts to derive new ones well. For example, when finding pairs of numbers that make 100, they use their knowledge of numbers that make 10. The most able pupils in each class are challenged and supported well and as a result, they achieve well. This is a sound improvement since the last inspection where some older, more able pupils were not sufficiently challenged. When pupils start school in Year 1, their attainment is around the expected level for their age. By the time they reach Year 2, however, standards are above average and this continues throughout the school. This demonstrates good achievement.
49. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and they plan lessons well. Teachers are particularly good at catering for the wide range of ability levels within classes. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, the high level of challenge for all ability groups, linked with effective teaching methods and support, led to pupils gaining a good understanding of using near doubles to solve problems. Pupils are encouraged to collaborate effectively and as a result, they share their ideas and learn from each other particularly well. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and this leads to good levels of productivity and a good sense of achievement for all pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work consistently to a satisfactory level. However, the marking does not give pupils advice as to how to improve their work and no opportunities are given for pupils to respond.
50. Good leadership has led to good improvements in standards over recent years. All key staff work effectively as a team and use data and diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses in standards to implement effective changes.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

51. In daily mathematics lessons, teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to use and apply their good basic skills in mathematics. However, there are many missed opportunities to do this in the rest of the curriculum. For example, in science and geography, there is insufficient use of graphs, tables, charts and measurements and in design and technology pupils have limited opportunities to measure lengths, quantities and time.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of pupils' work is above average
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school and their attitudes to the subject are very good
- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- Pupils' investigative skills are good
- Teachers' marking and feedback does not indicate to pupils what they need to do next to improve their work

## Commentary

52. The standards attained by most pupils in Year 2 are above that expected for their age. This represents good achievement for all pupils. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also achieve well and reach above average standards. This is particularly so in investigative work, where there are many good opportunities to develop enquiry skills.
53. Pupils talk with confidence and enthusiasm, demonstrating a good understanding of the work completed and very good attitudes to learning. This was particularly the case in the Years 3 and 4 class, testing materials for their properties of absorption. The teacher challenged all pupils well and pupils responded with great enthusiasm. By the end of the lesson, they had a clear idea of what constituted a fair test and how only one variable should be changed. Although work is marked, teachers do not consistently identify possibilities for improvement.
54. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In lessons, pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes to their work. Teachers manage pupils well, offering positive role models by displaying a calm, respectful manner. They give clear explanations of tasks and have high expectations of behaviour. Where pupils are offered opportunity to evaluate their own work and that of others, this is done well, effectively developing pupils' confidence. Pupils have good opportunities to work in pairs or groups, successfully promoting collaboration and co-operation. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to boost pupils' self-esteem, and teaching assistants support pupils well in group work. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils encounter a wide range of science work during their time in school. They record their work systematically and present their results with clarity.
55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although there has been no opportunity for the co-ordinator to observe teaching and learning in other classes, she has gained a good overview of provision and standards through monitoring teachers' planning and sampling pupils' work. The school has maintained the high standards reported in the last inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Descriptive writing is developed well using word processing software
- Pupils use the Internet well in their work in history

## **Commentary**

56. During the inspection, it was not possible to see any direct teaching of ICT. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them indicate that standards match national expectations in all year groups. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge of word processing, using programmable toys, databases and the Internet. They are enthusiastic about using computers and have access to a sound range of software, which is used appropriately to develop computer skills across the curriculum. Pupils in Year 4 have produced some very good creative writing about cats using word processing software to change the font in order to create effective displays. Pupils use the Internet to research history topics well. They talk with enthusiasm about finding out about Victorians using sites suggested by the teacher.

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

57. Information and communication technology is not sufficiently developed across the curriculum, although there are some good examples in history. However, teachers do not plan for pupils to develop skills in all subjects. For example, there is very little evidence of pupils developing their computer skills in music and geography.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious Education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision has improved since the last inspection
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their good literacy skills in this subject area.

## **Commentary**

58. Standards of attainment throughout the school match the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound understanding of Bible stories and know about the main events in the life of Jesus. Pupils in Year 4 have an appropriate understanding of Christianity and some other world faiths such as Islam. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress throughout the school. The provision has improved since the last inspection when insufficient time was devoted to religious education for older pupils.
59. Because only one lesson was observed, the judgement on the quality of teaching and learning has been made on limited evidence. However, in a good Year 4 lesson about Advent, the teacher showed a good understanding of the subject and gave very clear explanations to pupils. As a result, they understood that Advent means arrival. They also understood very well how Christians prepare for the celebration of the birth of Christ.
60. In discussion with pupils, they have a satisfactory understanding of religious education. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their good literacy and computer skills. This limits the standards pupils achieve.

## **Geography and history**

61. It was not possible during the inspection to observe any lessons in geography or history. However, in discussion with pupils, and by looking at their work, standards match those expected for each age group throughout the school. In both history and geography, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use their good writing and number skills. This limits the standards that they achieve. For example, in geography, pupils do not use graphs, charts and tables and there are few opportunities to write. In history, pupils do not use mathematical skills to develop a greater understanding of chronology.
62. Pupils in Year 2 and 4 have a good understanding of how to use maps and atlases. They use the contents and index to find information about countries quickly. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the countries and continents of the world.
63. At the time of the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were studying the Victorians as part of their history topic. A good range of items from this period were displayed, many of which had been brought to school by pupils. In discussion with pupils, they spoke with enthusiasm about the artefacts and described how many items were still used today whilst some were no longer used because of changing lifestyles. A good example of this was a bed warmer. One pupil explained *'This was a bit like a hot water bottle, but even now not many of us use these because most people have central heating'*.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and Design**

64. Although no lessons in art and design were observed during the inspections, discussions with pupils and displayed work show that standards are above the expected level in all year groups. This is a similar position as at the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 produce drawings and sketches of people that capture facial features and body shape well, producing convincing portraits. This is due to good pencil control and a good understanding of how to use different types of pencil to create different effects. For example, in a Year 4 portrait of a Victorian figure, a soft pencil was used particularly well in order to create shadow. Pupils use line and tone well to create life-like images.
65. Pupils experiment well with texture and the tactile qualities of their work adds extra interest. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 use glazed tissue paper to create a life-like skirt on a character. Year 1 and 2 produce some effective collage based on Matisse's 'Jazz: Icarus'.
66. Pupils in all year groups have a good understanding of the qualities and nature of paint. Year 2 pupils discuss colour mixing and talk about their paintings with great enthusiasm. Year 4 pupils use brushes to create interesting effects. For example, in a portrait of Florence Nightingale, one pupil used a flick of the brush to blur her skirt and this gives a strong sense of movement.

### **Design and Technology**

67. No lessons were observed in design and technology. Discussions with pupils about their work show that standards match the expected level in all year groups. Although there are some sound examples of the use of English and mathematics skills, there are missed opportunities for pupils to use these skills. Pupils in Year 2 use graphs appropriately to demonstrate likes and dislikes when looking at different types of bread. However, discussions with pupils about their work show that measurement, calculating times when cooking and other mathematical skills are not used sufficiently. Expectations that pupils will use their good writing skills in this



subject are too low. This results in rather poorly presented work that largely relies on pictures. Missed opportunities to develop labelled diagrams and instructions mean that pupils do not achieve as highly in design and technology as they do in English.

## **Music**

68. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection so judgements have been made on limited evidence. Pupils attain satisfactory standards in music. In a good Year 1 and 2 lesson, pupils developed the skill of developing their own musical notation in order to represent long and short sounds. Three of the most able pupils were given more challenging work, which the teacher had carefully planned. They performed as an orchestra, each holding their part, following the notation they had devised. This well developed, accurate performance is a good example of how teachers challenge the most able pupils well. Although generally standards have been maintained since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement in challenge levels for pupils that are more able. In discussion with pupils, they display very good attitudes to the subject and enthusiasm for the instrumental tuition they receive.

## **Physical Education**

Provision in physical education is satisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good
- The range of curricular opportunities is limited

## **Commentary**

69. The quality of teaching in physical education was good in the two lessons observed during the inspection. For example, in a good Year 4 gymnastics lesson, the teacher's good planning led to pupils developing a good understanding of the term 'level' when moving. Good ongoing feedback helped pupils to understand how to improve. However, there were some missed opportunities for pupils to suggest improvements to their own and others' work.
70. At the parents meeting, some parents expressed concern that the range of opportunities for sport is somewhat limited. The inspection team found this to be the case: Although the school meets statutory requirements in providing the full range of sporting activities, their frequency is rather low, with few after school activities.

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

### **Personal, Social and health education**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good policy and programme of work is in place, which provides good opportunities to develop this area of learning across the curriculum.

- The school is working successfully towards Healthy School designation
- Pupils very much enjoy this area of learning and display mature attitudes.

## **Commentary**

71. The school has a good policy to promote pupils' personal, social and health education. Aspects of health education are included in the science curriculum and this helps to deliver this area of learning in a meaningful way. Staff set high expectations of behaviour and pupils are encouraged to work together in harmony, being respectful and sensitive to the needs of others.
72. The school is working purposefully towards an award as a Healthy School. It has successfully completed many of the elements of the award and is supplementing its work with visits and visitors. Pupils speak lucidly of their work in discussion activities and feel secure in expressing their thoughts, views and feelings in a mature way. This is because of their very good attitudes to learning.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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