

INSPECTION REPORT

SHIREMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shiremoor, Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108579

Headteacher: Mrs H Clegg

Lead inspector: Mr Chris Quigley

Dates of inspection: 25 -27 April 2005

Inspection number: 267657

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of children:	3-11
Gender of children:	Mixed
Number on roll:	408
School address:	Stanton Road Shiremoor Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE27 0PW
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Caffrey
Date of previous inspection:	10/5/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Shiremoor Primary School is bigger than average, with 408 pupils on roll. The school, which includes a nursery, caters for pupils between the ages of three and 11. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average and the number of pupils who do not have English as their first language is slightly higher than in most other schools. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is well above the national average, but the number with statements is lower than average. The school serves an area characterised by multiple deprivation and is supported in its work through agencies such as Sure Start. There are a growing number of families who are being assisted by external agencies, such as social services, and the school sees many of its pupils as vulnerable and at risk of poor educational outcomes. Much of the school's work is designed to meet the complex needs of this community and to expand the horizons of pupils, who come from a starting point of well below average attainment when they start nursery. A number of awards have been gained in recognition of this work, and the school is involved with the Education Action Zone, Excellence in Cities, Sure Start and Behaviour Improvement Programme in order to improve outcomes for pupils. The school has also been a Beacon School, acting as an example of good practice for others.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
32507	Mr C Quigley	Lead inspector	mathematics, music
6949	Mrs J Smith	Lay inspector	
33225	Mrs E Greensides	Team inspector	Information and communication technology. Physical education
34122	Mr S Camby	Team inspector	science, geography, history
27677	Mrs D Davenport	Team inspector	Foundation stage of learning
27777	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	English, design and technology, religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an outstanding school. From a low starting point, all children make very good progress and achieve very well in both their personal and academic work. Shiremoor Primary School makes a real difference to the lives of children and to the community as a whole and provides excellent value for money.

The school's main strengths are:

- Leadership and management are excellent. As a result, all children achieve very well and enjoy school very much
- Systems to track the progress that children make are excellent.
- Children's involvement in setting targets is a model of outstanding practice and the feedback they get from their teachers is exceptional.
- Teaching and learning are very good although the school recognises the need to develop children's thinking skills more systematically.
- The curriculum is innovative and designed to meet the needs of children exceptionally well. It promotes children's future economic well-being in an outstanding way.
- Partnerships with other children's services are remarkable. This helps all children, no matter what their background, to enjoy learning and achieve their full potential.
- Despite the school's very good efforts to raise attendance, it remains unsatisfactory due to a small group of parents who do not make enough effort to bring their children to school.

The school was last inspected in May 1999 and since then has made excellent progress. Provision in nursery is now very good, teaching has improved, and the curriculum throughout the school has been transformed. The transition from a first school to a primary school has been managed exceptionally well and the school has maintained the exceptional quality of assessment.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose children attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The majority of children achieve very well, including those children who have special educational needs. When children start nursery their attainment is well below the expected level for their age, especially in their spoken language. The school does all it can to provide outstanding support for children and as a result, they make very good progress in nursery and achieve very well. In reception they make good progress and achieve well. The current picture of attainment is one in which, by the end of Year 2, children make very good progress, attaining standards that match the national expectation in mathematics. Standards are above average in science, and slightly below average in English. In all subjects, achievement is very good. The table above for 2004 shows that compared to the national picture, attainment for children in Year 6 was at the expected level in mathematics and science and in English it was above. This change in standards this year is due to the complex backgrounds of some children and although results were higher last year in English, all children continue to achieve very well. The similar schools' grades appear to show that the progress children make is much less than other children with similar abilities. This is not the true picture. Other, more reliable and more detailed data provided by the school's excellent tracking system and an independent evaluation of data provided by the local education authority, show that progress is very good in Years 3 to 6. The table above does not take into account the considerable barriers to achievement faced by some children due to their social and economic circumstances.

The current attainment of children in other subjects matches the national picture and, again, this represents very good achievement, given the low starting points and the need for the school to give priority to the basic skills. **Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Many children have a low starting point and the school is very effective in helping them to develop so that they are healthy and safe and enjoy school. This leads to high achievement and promotes their future economic well-being in an outstanding way.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is excellent and, hence, achievement is very good for all children. **Teaching is very good** and promotes learning very well because teachers use excellent tracking systems to help plan the next steps for learning. The way in which children are involved in this process is outstanding and leads to a deep understanding of their own learning. Teachers have very good knowledge of the areas they teach and they use this knowledge to extend children's knowledge and skills very well. The school recognises that there is further work to be done in deepening children's understanding by developing their thinking skills and they have a very good plan to allow this to take place. The curriculum is outstanding because it meets fully the needs of all children. It is interesting and exciting and promotes children's personal and academic achievements in equal measure. In particular, it promotes children's future economic well-being in an outstanding way because of the excellent 'Choices Week' as well as the above average standards achieved in communication. Care, guidance and support are excellent because, in this school, every child matters and therefore excellent systems ensure that children are given the support that they need. Partnerships with other children's agencies are exemplary and they are particularly helpful in promoting achievement of children who are at risk of achieving poor educational outcomes. Excellent business links help teachers to develop very good evaluation skills and this has a direct impact on children's achievement. The school is very ready to share its many examples of outstanding practice with other schools and is, in many ways a centre of excellence.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher leads the school's development outstandingly well and has very strong support from the Deputy Head and Assistant Head. Teamwork is outstanding and this helps to translate the Headteacher's strong vision and high aspirations into practice. Long-term planning is excellent. It involves everyone, and stems from rigorous self-evaluation and a constant commitment to raising children's personal and academic achievement. Highly effective systems for the recruitment, induction and deployment of staff, and for their professional development, reflect excellent management. The governors make an excellent contribution to the school in the way they shape, challenge, support and evaluate its performance and development. They ensure that all legal requirements are met. Far-sighted, excellent financial planning enables the school to achieve its educational priorities, which include ways to allow teachers to have more time to plan and prepare lessons, as the government is currently urging schools to do.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and children hold the school in very high regard and the majority of parents are extremely pleased with the education provided. A small proportion, however, do not make enough effort to send their children to school. Children have a very strong voice and as a result, they make a positive contribution to their own and the wider community.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Minor improvements

- To continue to develop children's thinking skills
- To continue to develop the very good work in improving attendance

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

All children in Years 1 to 6 achieve very well. By the time children leave the school, standards match the national expectation in most areas and in some, they go beyond. This represents very good achievement, given the well below average starting points for most children. Children in the foundation stage of learning achieve well. Children from all ethnic groups achieve as well as each other.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher's excellent leadership ensures every child achieves highly.
- Very good teaching helps the majority of children to achieve very well.
- Children with special educational needs achieve very well because the school is highly successful at identifying learning difficulties and minimising their effects.
- The curriculum is exciting and innovative and helps children to gain an all-round high quality education, reaching at least the expected level from well below average starting points.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (15.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.3 (15.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.9 (16.2)	16.2(16.3)

There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (27.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.0 (26.4)	27 (26.8)
science	29.1 (29.2)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 46 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The head teacher sets the tone for the school in which high achievement is widespread. She has developed, in conjunction with key leaders throughout the school, excellent management systems that track children's progress extremely effectively. Coupled with outstanding child involvement in setting targets for improvement, these systems ensure that every child reaches their full potential. From a well below average starting point for the majority of children, the pattern of achievement throughout the school is:
 - Rapid progress in nursery because of very good provision in all areas and then good progress in reception;
 - Continued rapid progress in Years 1 and 2;
 - Very good progress in Years 3 to 6, given the significant barriers to achievement faced by many children, resulting in average standards in English, and generally, rising standards in all subjects over time. The standards in English looked at alongside

attainment that matches the national expectation in other areas, represents a marvellous achievement led by the Assistant Head.

2. In the majority of lessons, very good teaching leads to high achievement. Teachers and support staff work together very effectively to ensure that lessons, and the feedback that children receive helps to build upon learning in a very careful way. Children speak with enthusiasm about their learning, they enjoy school very much, and the very good attitudes that they develop help them to succeed.
3. The many children who have special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their previous attainment and the very precise targets that guide their progress. Most of these children attain the nationally expected level of performance in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. Some do much better than that. Children with learning or behaviour difficulties who join the school at a late stage do very well during their time at the school. The main reasons for these impressive successes are:
 - the school's unswerving commitment to 'success for all';
 - rigorous systems for assessing and monitoring every child's progress, and for writing and using high quality individual education plans;
 - highly committed support staff working in very strong partnership with teachers.
 - Equally effective provisions also enable the most able children to achieve very well in relation to their capabilities.
4. The way in which children are taught to make choices about their future careers and to make decisions is outstanding. It promotes their future economic well-being and helps to develop very good attitudes towards the responsibilities of learning. This is a major factor in the high achievement of all children.

Children' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as is their personal development. Attendance, however, is below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's work ethic and their enthusiasm for school activities are outstanding
- The school's promotion of good behaviour is exceptionally good
- The promotion of children's moral development and of cultural development is outstanding
- Children grow strongly in confidence and self-esteem as they move up the school
- Despite all the school's efforts attendance is slightly below the national average

Commentary

5. The school is remarkable for its strong work ethic and the sense of educational purpose that permeates it. As a result of this and of very good teaching, children are extremely well motivated. Year 6 children spoke with great pride of their school and its motto "Our quest is knowledge". Children are very keen to do well and are grateful to teachers and other staff for all the extra help they are given. These very positive attitudes aid their achievement very effectively. Children also speak enthusiastically about the wide range of trips, clubs, visitors and special weeks which help to make their learning fun.
6. The school has exceptionally good systems for promoting good behaviour and as a result even the youngest children behave very well and no time is lost for learning. Given that there are many children who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour, this is a remarkable achievement. Particular strengths are teachers' very good behaviour management techniques and the high degree of consistency of approach of all staff to behaviour. The school pays particular care to ensuring that this consistency also applies to lunchtime, where trained lunchtime supervisors each have responsibility for different year

groups. This is a very effective way of ensuring that any problems arising at lunchtime do not affect children's learning during lessons. Children's relationships with each other and with adults are very friendly and considerate. A few parents expressed concerns about bullying. However, incidents of bullying are infrequent and the school deals promptly and efficiently with any which occur. The two fixed-term exclusions given last year were given appropriately and only after the school had worked hard at other strategies. Because the school is extremely good at removing barriers to learning, many children with behavioural problems make remarkable progress in improving their social awareness and conduct. They often learn to play a full and constructive part in school life.

7. Many children start school with low self-esteem, which hampers their development. Rigorous and skilled assessment of children in the Foundation Stage enables staff to target help very effectively where it is needed. Through regular praise and encouragement, the use of a very good award scheme and the excellent use of achievable learning targets, children grow strongly in confidence as they move through the school and older children are confident and articulate young people who provide very good role models for younger children. An integral part of the school's very effective work in raising children's aspirations is the systematic way it seeks to widen horizons through excellent opportunities for enrichment including regular careers days. The many very good opportunities to exercise responsibility which the school provides, such as membership of the "Stay Safe and Happy Management Committee", also promote children's social development very effectively.
8. The school is highly successful in the way it promotes a clear moral code through all aspects of school life. As a result, children develop a clear sense of right and wrong and show a high level of consideration for others as well as respect for the environment. Spiritual development is good. Daily assemblies promote the school's moral values very effectively but there is scope both in lessons and assemblies for allowing more space for reflection, for the development of self-knowledge and of spiritual awareness in its widest sense.
9. The way in which the school broadens children's horizons through its provision for cultural development is outstanding. Respect for other cultures and religions is a strong feature of the school and during the innovative 'Choices Week', which is held every term, children spend one day learning about another religion. Involvement in the Comenius programme enables children to learn about selected European countries, communicate with children in other schools and participate in creative days. This is a very effective way of introducing children to the idea of global citizenship. The exceptionally good range of extra-curricular clubs, numerous visits and visitors also help to broaden children's cultural horizons very effectively.
10. Most children are keen to come to school and attend regularly. However, some parents do not ensure their children's regular attendance and the attendance rate is below the national average. The school monitors attendance very closely and uses many good strategies to improve it, such as the introduction of a breakfast club and regular communication with parents when there are concerns. These strategies have resulted in good improvement in attendance. The school reports no unauthorised absence but should review its procedures for authorising absence in order to strengthen the message it sends to parents who do not ensure their children's regular attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	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

Ethnic background of children

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of children on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	295	2	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall the quality of education is excellent because provision is closely matched to the context of the school and the needs of children.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is excellent and this leads to high achievement for all children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Systems to track the progress that children make are excellent. Children's involvement in this process is outstanding.
- Teachers manage time in an outstanding way and every moment of the school day is used for learning.
- All staff have a very good understanding of the subjects they teach and this helps them to plan carefully.
- Knowledge and skills are taught very well but the school recognises the need to develop children's thinking skills so that they have a deeper understanding of the things they learn.

Commentary

11. All children achieve highly because of the excellent tracking systems developed by the school. Children's progress is very carefully monitored and this information is used to ensure that the next steps for learning are very carefully planned. The school describes the system as 'fail safe' and inspectors agree fully. For example, if a child is absent and misses the teaching of a key piece of work, then this is recorded and the excellent management systems allow for catch up activities to be arranged. In the longer term, learning targets are very successfully used to help children understand how they may improve their work over time. Children play an outstanding role in setting their own personal and academic targets, which are captured on digital video and reviewed at regular intervals. Children speak with great enthusiasm for this and they have, as a result, a deep understanding of their own learning. In Years 3 to 6, children use the lesson aim as the title and the work is marked according to the planned outcome of the work. This very successfully gives children an indication of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve the work further. In some cases, children self-evaluate their work and this is having a significant impact on their self confidence and in taking responsibility for their own learning.

12. Every lesson starts on time. The school's excellent management systems, and the dedication of all staff in ensuring that every child succeeds, means that teachers and assistants take their classes or groups promptly, and no time is wasted. Inspectors were

extremely impressed with the excellent use of time and the way in which teachers had high expectations for children. In a very good French lesson in Year 6, children had no sooner entered the classroom than they were greeting each other in French and learning new vocabulary at a rapid rate. Because of the outstanding use of available time, children gain knowledge and skills at an impressive rate and productivity in lessons is high.

13. Coupled with the impressive rate of learning is the very good knowledge of the areas of learning staff have. This helps them to plan challenging but realistic work and to ask high quality questions in order to help children to understand new ideas. The very careful deployment of staff, with more experienced teachers coaching those new to the profession, is an excellent example of the school’s commitment to training and the result is one of very good expertise. A good example of this is the very good nursery teacher, who is carefully coaching the reception teachers, and they are becoming increasingly effective and knowledgeable. The deputy head teacher works very effectively with newly qualified teachers and supports them in developing their expertise at a rapid rate.
14. The excellent quality of the leadership and management of the school promotes reflective teachers that are ever keen to improve. The head teacher gives time for teachers to plan, prepare and assess children’s work and has done so for many years – long before the current government initiative to do so. This is an excellent indication of the commitment the headteacher has to high quality learning. This also means that teachers have identified that they need to develop children’s thinking skills further so that they develop a better understanding of what they learn. A very good action plan highlights this and, in the lessons that were very good, this is already happening to some degree. Good lessons tended to have fewer elements of children’s involvement in higher order thinking and reasoning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(3%)	14 (42%)	15(45%)	3(9%)	0(0%)	0(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.

The curriculum

The school provides an outstanding curriculum for its children, with excellent breadth and enrichment and very good use of accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children’s personal and social education and citizenship is excellent.
- Children are extremely well prepared for the next stages of their education
- The curriculum is innovative and exciting and leads to very good achievement
- Children have excellent opportunities both inside and outside of lessons
- The school resources and its accommodation are very well used.

Commentary

15. Provision for children’ personal and social education and citizenship is excellent and this prepares children for their future economic well-being in an outstanding way. The school’s ‘Choices’ Week’ once each term gives children outstanding opportunities to consider some of their life choices, through a variety of different themes. Through the study of European countries, children have excellent opportunities to learn about different career options. These are often linked together with questions such as “How might learning French help me in my career?” The school rules are re-considered, and compared with, for example, European, or national laws. Children’s books analysed from these weeks show very good achievement in their understanding of themselves and others.

16. 'Choices Week', the school rules, and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in school ensure that children are extremely well prepared for the next stages of their education. This is not limited to older children, who are preparing to leave for secondary education, but younger children are also helped to be ready for a more demanding curriculum. For example, in a strategic and well thought out way, the school teams have been developed so that the curriculum, and the way that lessons are taught for children in the foundation stage, is only changed gradually when they enter the main school. This allows them to settle quickly and prepare them for a more formal curriculum. In a similar way, teachers from Year 2 work in partnership with those in Year 3 to ensure that transition between the key stages is smooth and effortless.
17. An exciting and innovative approach to curriculum development extends and enriches basic curriculum provision. This involves making the most of one off opportunities such as the National Birdwatch Week, the General Election of 2005 and the Royal Wedding of Prince Charles, but also regular items such as the 'Choices' Week when children begin to make choices about their lives and interests. Creativity days and arts weeks are woven in exceptionally well, and there has been an excellent approach to cross-curricular themes such as 'Space', which are taught through a variety of carefully considered interlinked themes. Children from the age of seven are taught French very well.
18. Children of all ages have very good opportunities to join in activities at lunchtime, before school and at the end of the school day. The focus of these extends beyond sporting themes, such as the football, netball and dance often seen in many schools, and the school offers an Environment club, maths, handwriting, history, judo and Harry Potter clubs. Children join in trips to other places, meet a wide variety of visitors in school, and take part in residential trips each year to widen their knowledge and understanding.
19. The school makes very good use of all its resources, including its use of teaching support assistants. The support given by the ICT technician is excellent, and leads to very good achievement in lessons across the whole curriculum. The very good ratio of teaching staff to children is used to ensure that children have extra support or extension, including lessons for very high ability children in a variety of subjects. When planning lessons, teachers make use of the full range of accommodation, including the pond in the internal yard and the extensive school grounds. Any spare spaces are thoughtfully used; as an example, a spare classroom is currently a very good resource for the teaching of science and art. Wall displays in all classrooms are bright and attractive, and often interactive, encouraging children to reflect very well on their learning, and is a well used learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides an excellent standard of care for its children. All staff give excellent personal support, advice and guidance to their children. Monitoring of academic and social progress is outstanding and the involvement of children in the work of the school is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has excellent procedures to ensure that all children are safe and well cared for at all times.
- The school has exemplary arrangements in place to ensure effective work with external agencies.
- Outstanding tracking systems ensure that all children make very good achievement.
- The school has excellent arrangements to ensure that children are fully involved in decision making to improve the school.

Commentary

20. The school makes every effort to ensure that the children work in a safe environment. There are excellent systems in place for child protection. All staff are clear about how these operate. Staff receive regular training to update their knowledge of child protection procedures. The school has excellent systems in place to ensure that the safety of the children is of prime importance. Daily checks are undertaken to make sure that the whole site is safe and secure. The school has very clear procedures for the administration of medication during the school day and for dealing with accidents.
21. The school has exemplary systems in place for its work with external agencies. The school takes a lead role in ensuring that input from outside organisations is well co-ordinated to benefit the children. The deputy headteacher co-ordinates the work with these other organisations. Due to the excellent systems for internal communication, the school can easily and quickly ensure that all staff concerned are able to have up to date information about any child. A strength of the school is the ability to work in partnership with parents and carers in the best interests of the child. The school often holds meetings with other agencies in school in order to provide a familiar setting and enable parents and carers to attend.
22. Children have very good levels of supervision at all times. A particular strength of the school is the arrangement for the care of children during the lunchtime. The team of midday supervisors is a strong feature of the school. The team is led by the Senior Supervisor and has a highly structured system which includes a daily briefing. Each year group has an allocated midday supervisor. This person plays a central role in ensuring continuity of care between the classroom and the lunchtime. The midday supervisor feeds back any important information to the class teacher at the end of the lunchtime. This is an excellent system which ensures that issues are dealt with calmly and effectively.
23. The school has outstanding systems in place to track the progress that children make in school. As a result of these excellent systems, staff know the children very well and can provide appropriate support. This is one of the reasons why children achieve very well whilst at the school. Each child has individual targets, which they agree with their teacher. Children understand their targets and know what they need to do in order to improve. The youngest children in school have a very good start to life in school. Induction into school is very carefully planned to make sure that children settle quickly into school life. All parents are offered a home visit and a very clear information pack.
24. Children play an excellent role in shaping the school community. The school has a well established 'Stay Safe and Happy Management Committee'. This committee has representatives from each class. They meet weekly and consider issues which have been raised in classes. The committee feeds back the outcomes of their work in a whole school assembly each week. When asked, the children are clear that their ideas will be listened to and that they have a role in improving their school. The committee makes an excellent contribution to making the school an enjoyable place in which to learn and play.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's very good partnership with parents and excellent links with the community and other schools enrich children's education very effectively

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good information, consultation and communication underpin the school's very good partnership with parents
- The school works very effectively to encourage parents to support their children's learning at home
- The school has excellent links with businesses
- The school is very ready to share its many examples of outstanding practice with other schools

Commentary

25. Parents hold the school in very high regard and there are many strengths in the school's partnership with them. Information for parents, including annual reports on children's progress, is of high quality. Teachers are always ready to talk to parents about any concerns they may have. The school consults parents very regularly and responds appropriately to their suggestions; for example the school now provides after-school clubs for younger children as a result of parents' requests. Parents are made to feel very welcome by the school and are invited to many special events, activities and family outings. Parents show their support for the school by helping to prepare homework packs and by helping with visits and the breakfast club.
26. Although many parents support their children's learning well at home, some do not. The school works very hard and has many very good strategies to increase parents' involvement in their children's work. Well prepared book bags and activity packs are very successful with younger children and their families. The appointment of a designated teacher for parental involvement enables the school to approach parents to offer support on an individual basis and to ensure that as many as possible attend the reading workshops which show parents how they can support their children's reading. The school's well planned and systematic approach to homework is of benefit to both children and parents.
27. The school's excellent links with the community include strong links with external agencies such as 'Sure Start' and Northumbria Police and also with the local church. Outstanding links with businesses bring many benefits. Talks given by experts enliven the curriculum very effectively for children. The school uses its links with companies to aid staff development and bring in fresh ideas. It has also developed useful educational materials in conjunction with Northumbria Water and with Alnwick Gardens. The school has won many awards and held 'Beacon Status' for several years and it has always been very ready to share its expertise with other schools. The school also has many strong curriculum links with the local secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher gives excellent leadership; other key staff lead their areas very effectively. Overall, the governance and management of the school are outstanding.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads the school's development outstandingly well and has very strong support from the Deputy Head and Assistant Head and other staff who have leadership roles.
- Outstanding systems of teamwork unify and drive the work of the school, and translate the Headteacher's strong vision and high aspirations into practice.
- Excellent strategic planning involves everyone, and stems from rigorous and comprehensive self-evaluation and a constant commitment to raising children's personal and academic achievement.
- Highly effective systems for the recruitment, induction and deployment of staff, and for their professional development, reflect excellent management.
- The governors make an excellent contribution to the school in the way they shape, challenge, support and evaluate its performance and development.
- Extremely prudent and far-sighted financial planning enables the school to achieve its educational priorities, which include significant workforce reform.

Commentary

28. The school's high aims, values, ethos and achievement reflect the Headteacher's clear, far-sighted and challenging vision. This vision centres on enabling all children to do as well as

they possibly can, personally, socially and academically. It unifies the efforts of all staff because the headteacher has created excellent systems of teamwork and communication. These systems give all staff, and many children and parents, a voice and a well-defined role in the dynamic process of school improvement. They also carry the Headteacher's questioning and consultative approach into every corner of school life, and ensure that key staff are always aware of concerns and aspirations at every level. Sensitive use of these networks fosters a shared understanding of what needs to be done and a strong commitment to doing it. The senior management team works closely with the governing body to translate this into cohesive action that breaks down the many barriers to learning and realises the school's aims.

29. All key staff lead and represent significant teams. This ensures that their work in strategic planning draws on many skills, and is in tune with professional thinking and needs across the school. As a result, everyone understands the agreed priorities for improvement, and how to work together to make them happen. These processes give clarity and consent to school improvement in the long term. They also enable the school to achieve radical changes quickly and with very positive results. For example, the introduction of interactive whiteboards into classrooms means that the use of ICT supports teaching and learning in most areas more powerfully, and that teaching time and resources are used more efficiently. The school is also tackling the difficult issue of workforce reform with enterprise and imagination. Bold investments have improved the work-life balance for staff. At the same time they have brought exciting innovation into the curriculum for younger children, and significantly improved the quality and use of assessment information across the school. All major developments are managed extremely well through thorough analysis and consultation, careful weighing of priorities in relation to needs and resources, very skilful planning, effective training programmes, and a measured pace of change.
30. The strong commitment and professionalism of staff are major factors in ensuring constant improvement in provision and performance. The high quality of the whole staff team reflects the school's shrewdness and effectiveness in appointing, retaining, training and deploying them. Because the school is an ideal context in which to develop leadership and other dynamic professional qualities, many teachers move on to higher positions elsewhere. Systems of mutual professional support are excellent, especially in helping new staff find their feet. Subject leaders play a significant role, outstandingly so in English, led by the Assistant Head in identifying and leading improvements. They work with impressive unity of purpose and can rely on the readiness and ability of colleagues to translate new ideas into better practice, and to evaluate and share results. Excellent provision for children's many and varied special educational needs also stems from highly effective teamwork and outstanding leadership and management. The deputy headteacher co-ordinates the work of a very strong and well-resourced team. She brings great competence, experience and depth of understanding to the role. This ensures that the management systems are well-grounded in the school's aims, and are efficient and comprehensive. Strong links with the governing body and outside agencies reinforce the team effort. All aspects of provision are thoroughly monitored so that all needs are met, achievement is high and the national Code of Practice scrupulously followed.
31. The school's rigorous and comprehensive systems for analysing and monitoring its own performance inform all that it does, and shape its plans for development. Detailed evidence on the progress of each child enables the school to analyse the relative achievements of different groups over time. This in turn enables the school to evaluate achievement in ways that take account of significant factors that are specific to the school. For example, a high and increasing proportion of children join or leave the school at other than the usual times. Analyses that include such contextual factors give a more accurate picture of actual achievement than much national data. By evaluating the school's work in such ways, management has a clear picture of how well different areas meet the diverse needs of the children. Action plans from all areas of the school combine into a coherent school development plan, each part of which has realistic targets, success criteria, timescales and costings, and is based on a clear evaluation of previous achievements. The process

ensures that each area contributes clearly to the school's priorities for improvement. Excellent procedures for professional development bond into this development plan. Each teacher agrees three personal targets annually that are based on an individual review and linked to school improvement targets.

32. The governing body fulfils all parts of its role extremely well, and makes an excellent contribution to school development, both through its involvement, commitment, challenge and support, and through its very close working relationship with the senior management team. Governors share and reinforce the Headteacher's ambition for ever better provision and ever higher achievement, but they also question performance, and challenge proposed developments and spending priorities. They are in a very good position to do this because of their direct and active involvement in the work of the school. Many governors contribute regularly to school activities such as extra-curricular clubs and learning support. They undertake training for their roles. They gather information about the school's strengths and areas for development through a very effective and well-informed system of committees which give each member clear roles and responsibilities. They also gather information by first-hand observation. For example, to check up on the impact of particular developments and investment, they look closely at the work of children in one year group, and try to trace relevant threads through a range of evidence. Many procedures of this kind, including formal 'monitoring days' in school, both reflect the commitment of the governing body and strengthen its critical role in ensuring that the school does all it can to get the best out of every child.
33. Partly as a result of the effectiveness of the governors and the administrator, financial management is excellent. All spending decisions are thoroughly checked for 'best value' and rigorously tied to the school's educational priorities. Children's needs outweigh all other considerations when financial decisions are agreed, and these same criteria measure the effect of each investment. The school gives excellent value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,027,284	Balances from previous year	25,437
Total expenditure	1,018,864	Balance carried Forward to the next	33,857
Expenditure per pupil	2,633		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

34. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children in the nursery are taught on a part-time basis and there are two reception classes. Most children start school with levels of attainment that are well below those expected for their age. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in the nursery. As a result, children make good progress during their nursery and reception years and they achieve well. However, although the majority of children are on course to reach the expected goals in personal, social and emotional development, standards in the other areas of learning are below those expected by the end of their reception year. Children with special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good support they receive.
35. Curricular planning is very good, with a wide range of practical activities to develop children's skills in all areas of learning. Visits and visitors to the school effectively enrich the curriculum by providing further experiences for the children. Very good induction procedures and information to parents ensure that children settle quickly into school routines. All staff work very well together and have a clear understanding of how young children learn. They form very good relationships with the children, who are very well cared for in a safe, secure and attractive learning environment. Work is very well matched to the children's needs and progress is regularly assessed and carefully recorded. This information is used very well to plan the next stages of learning and parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. Accommodation and resources are very good and effectively used to support learning, although there is limited use of the outdoor area to promote continuous learning across the curriculum throughout the day or to develop children's physical skills. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection, especially in the nursery.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships and clear routines ensure that children feel safe, secure and happy
- Good teaching promotes very good attitudes to school and to learning and as a result, children achieve very well.
- Children work and play very well together and behave very well.

Commentary

36. Children's personal skills are developed effectively across all areas of learning and, as a result, children achieve very well. Children enjoy coming to school and settle quickly into school routines. They work and play happily together and feel safe and secure because of the very good relationships they form with adults and with each other. Children in both the nursery and reception classes develop good personal skills through a variety of activities. For example, during snack time they patiently wait their turn to collect their drinks and fruit, put on aprons for creative work and tidy up after activities. Good opportunities are provided for the children to work individually and with others taking turns, sharing resources and handling equipment carefully. Teaching is good and children show very good attitudes to learning by listening attentively, following instructions carefully and concentrating well on tasks. This has a positive impact on their learning. The majority of children are on course to reach the expected goals as they move into Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, and support staff contribute very effectively to children's learning.
- A good range of opportunities and activities are provided to promote communication, language and literacy skills in all areas of learning.

Commentary

37. Most children start school with poor communication skills. Their vocabulary is very limited and many lack clarity and confidence when speaking to adults or in groups. However, the staff in both the nursery and reception classes take every opportunity to interact with the children to extend their language skills and knowledge of words. For example, they encourage them to share their "news", to talk about the mini-beasts they are observing and to participate fully during role-play activities. Most children have had little experience of books before they start school, but they enjoy listening to stories and know that words and pictures carry meaning. However, the majority of children are at an early stage in learning letter sounds, and in acquiring writing and handwriting skills. However, the more able children are making good attempts to group letters together into recognisable words, and simple sentences. Teaching is good and the very well briefed and knowledgeable support staff contribute in great measure to the children's good achievement as they successfully encourage them to use and extend their language and literacy skills in other areas of learning. However, few children are likely to reach the goals expected by the end of their reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well planned practical activities and good teaching promote good learning.
- Children have very good attitudes to their work and show good levels of concentration.

Commentary

38. A varied range of practical activities such as sequencing patterns, sorting and counting objects and practical shape work all contribute well to the children's mathematical development in the nursery and reception classes. The nursery children are beginning to recognise and order numbers to 5 and the reception children build well on this as they accurately sequence numbers to 20. However, in the lesson seen, activities lacked challenge for the more able children who have a secure understanding of ordering numbers and can use this knowledge effectively to record simple problems such as adding two digits together to 10. Children's recorded work shows they are developing an appropriate range of mathematical vocabulary, as they measure and compare a range of objects and make patterns using common two-dimensional shapes. Teaching is good and children enjoy their work, showing good levels of concentration during all activities. This has a positive impact on their learning and as a result they achieve well. However, the majority of children are unlikely to reach the goals expected by the end of their reception year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and as a result, children achieve well.
- A varied range of activities and resources makes learning interesting and fun.

Commentary

39. Good teaching and well planned practical activities stimulate children's curiosity and effectively widen their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children in the nursery and reception classes really enjoy their work on mini-beasts through their first hand observations of a variety of creatures, the use of information books and jigsaws and their work as "scientists" in role play activities. Effective links are made between the different areas of learning, as, for example, nursery children explore three different citrus fruits using their sense of taste and smell, while reception children learn about the customs and beliefs of others through the celebration of Chinese New Year. Children in both the nursery and reception classes can use talking books and show appropriate mouse control when using a computer program to consolidate their number work. Children are encouraged to record their learning in a variety of ways including writing, drawing and creative work and they achieve well because of the very good support they receive from the adults working with them. However, few children are on course to reach the goals expected as they move to Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

40. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or teaching in this area, as no direct teaching was observed. However, evidence shows that an appropriate range of well planned activities satisfactorily develops the children's physical skills of control and co-ordination. The children use a variety of cutting and sticking equipment, paint brushes, pencils and small construction kits which effectively develop their manipulative skills. Reception children display a good range of movements as they jump, climb, stretch and balance using a variety of apparatus in physical education lessons. However, the outdoor area is underused on a daily basis to allow children freedom of movement. As a result, the children in both the nursery and reception classes have limited opportunities to develop their physical skills by using large play and climbing equipment and wheeled toys.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of practical activities, which is linked well to other areas of learning.
- Teaching is good, children enjoy their work and as a result they achieve well.

Commentary

41. Well planned activities ensure that the children have good opportunities to draw, paint, and make pictures and models using a variety of media. The children's work is often linked to other areas of learning as, for example, when the nursery children paint pictures and construct three-dimensional models to illustrate the life cycle of the butterfly, while reception children make observational paintings of spring flowers. Children enjoy the role play activities in the Italian restaurant and "science laboratory" and the good support they receive effectively develops their confidence, their imaginative language and their speaking and listening skills. Children enthusiastically sing a range of simple songs and rhymes, adding actions when appropriate. Teaching is good and children achieve well, although only a small minority are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of their reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children with very different capabilities all achieve very well, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Very good leadership and outstanding management constantly monitor and improve the quality and impact of provision.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall, although more could often be done to develop and use children's skills in spoken English to strengthen their learning.
- The curriculum is excellent, with particular strengths in provision for the many children who have language difficulties.
- Children's very good achievement in developing personal qualities of interest and work ethic strongly supports their achievement in English.

Commentary

42. Attainment in English is below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. This represents very good achievement overall as the attainment of most children is low when they join the school, and many face significant barriers to learning. All of those who stay at the school from nursery to Year 6 make the progress expected nationally, and most do much better than this. Children with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their capabilities, as also do the more able children. Boys and girls do equally well, although boys' attainment is lower in relation to the national difference. The many children who join the school at a late stage also achieve very well during their time there. The school has extremely strong systems to assess, support, value, include, track and challenge each child. These systems focus on achievement. They pick out and tackle the first symptoms of any underachievement. Unlike national analyses, they also take proper account of factors such as pupil mobility when measuring how far children have advanced from their previous attainment. These analyses powerfully confirm the above picture of achievement. The quality of achievement varies slightly, as it gathers pace in the later years. It broadly reflects the quality of teaching.
43. Attainment, on the other hand, tends to vary from year to year according to the changing character of intakes and the number, now always significant, of children who join at a late stage. In 2004, the test results for Year 6 were above average. Most notably, 41 per cent of children reached the higher than expected level. Children now in Year 6 are unlikely to match this percentage, although their achievement is the same, and the school's use of targets and its focus on stretching the more gifted writers are equally rigorous and effective.
44. The work of the subject leader is of the highest quality and does much to maintain the consistently high level of achievement across such a wide range of needs. She makes rigorous use of much excellent assessment information to monitor and evaluate performance in English across different areas and groups. This gives priorities for improvement a firm basis. The development plan spells out clear and significant targets, together with systematic actions to bring them about. Current targets interrelate well in terms of children's needs, and link closely to earlier targets. Continuous processes of professional development, resourcing and curricular innovation contribute strongly to the subject's very good improvement since the previous inspection. The curriculum is excellent overall because it is so precisely attuned to children's different needs. The range of strategies, resources and skilled support for children who find literacy difficult is impressive. It is matched by the effectiveness of provision for gifted writers. The curriculum is also enriched by further activities, such as an Easter school, Book Week and Writing Week.

45. Taken overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. It is the consistency of key strengths across the school, in lessons and also reflected in children's work over time that accounts for the high achievement of different groups. These common strengths reflect an effective unity of purpose across the age range. Teachers keep the learning objective in view throughout the lesson so that new learning builds in clear and focused stages. Teachers' written feedback on children's work, whilst not yet entirely consistent, often uses the learning objective to help children to see where they have achieved it and where they could do better. This very good guidance is clearly making a difference and helping children to learn how to use success criteria for themselves. Teachers manage behaviour, time and resources, including the interactive whiteboards, extremely well. The major strength, however, is the use of high quality assessment information to enable each group to learn at its own best rate. Teachers have very good strategies, including personal targets, strong teamwork with support staff and a sensitive mixture of challenge and support, to make this happen and to check that it does.
46. The school recognises, as a continuing priority for development, the need to improve children's speaking skills in order to support all learning. Whilst children make good progress, standards are lower in spoken English than in literacy. Although children now have an improving range of opportunities to extend their skills, for example in assemblies and dramatic productions, planning for speaking and listening is inconsistent, and the range of approaches is often limited. In English lessons, speaking, listening, reading and writing seldom interact and support each other as well as they could. Children have few chances to explore new learning informally together in their own words before they share their thoughts more formally with the class. Progress in this area is assumed, rather than planned and monitored. Assessment is relatively limited and few targets are set to help children's speaking skills keep pace with the increasing demands of the curriculum.
47. Standards in reading are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6, though many of the children who remain at the school for several years reach higher than expected levels. Most children with SEN reach the expected levels by the end of Year 6. In writing, the picture is similar, although overall attainment is below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. The school provides very well for children with very different needs to develop secure basic skills in literacy and to maintain good attitudes to books and writing. The school's remarkable effectiveness in promoting children's personal qualities, and their positive view of themselves as learners, contributes greatly to their achievement in literacy. Very little is left to chance, and the quality of learning opportunities, resources, strategies and assessment is high and always improving. The very good libraries contribute well, although the limited lending system restricts the development of independent library skills. By the end of Year 6, children choose and use books with confident skill. They detect different layers of meaning in a fiction text. The more able readers explain how certain language features influence the way they see a character or respond to a situation. Children's response to non-fiction texts is less informed and secure, particularly in their understanding of how to locate and extract specific information. In writing, the progress made by different groups of children in Years 4, 5 and 6 is impressive across a range of skills. In Year 6, the more able children write at length, with assured control of detail, structure and style. They respond very well to challenging opportunities to write extended factual or imaginative work. Their high achievement is both recorded and guided by the teachers' excellent written feedback on their work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Overall, English and the rest of the curriculum support each other well. The school is striving to improve cross-curricular work in both literacy and spoken English, and some good practice is evident. Strengthening links with ICT are making an increasing impact on children's language skills. More could still be done, however, to develop children's reading, writing and speaking skills by using them more rigorously to support learning in other subjects.

FRENCH

49. Only one lesson was observed in French, and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision. The lesson was, however, very good and children enjoyed greeting each other and learning new vocabulary very much. Children in Year 6 greet each other with 'Bonjour, Ça va?' and respond with 'Ça va bien, merci. Et toi?' They also use a good range of words and phrases to describe the weather: Il froid, Il pleut, Il fait du soleil et Il fait beau. Resources and excellent planning kept children engaged very well during the lesson and the highly interactive teaching meant that children made rapid progress.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good assessment procedures ensure all children achieve very well. Children particularly relish solving mathematical problems
- High expectations from all staff mean that all children are challenged and supported very effectively
- Leadership of the subject is very good
- The very good use of staff enables children to receive high quality guidance
- Resources are used very well to involve children in lessons

Commentary

50. Achievement for all children is very high. When they begin Year 1, children's attainment is below the expected level despite good provision in the Foundation Stage of learning. This is because of the very low starting point for many children. However, because the school is highly effective in tackling barriers to achievement, they make rapid progress throughout Years 1 and 2, culminating in above average standards. In Years 3 to 6, many pupils face a great deal of personal challenges due to, in some cases, a disrupted home life. These children are at risk of achieving poor educational outcomes and yet the school is highly effective in supporting them. The picture of achievement is, therefore, high and they progress well, reaching standards that match the national expectation. Year 2 children use mathematical names for two and three-dimensional shapes and describe their properties well. They are confident in all forms of measurement and their skills in remembering and using number facts are well developed. Year 6 children particularly relish problem-solving activities. This is because of their very good ability to extract and interpret data and because of their well-developed knowledge of calculation strategies. In discussion with a group of Year 6 children, they were delighted by the challenge of working out averages, calculating unknown angles and representing proportions on a pie chart and this small group displayed attainment beyond the national expectation. The high level of challenge and support, where necessary, helps all children to reach their full potential and they have very positive attitudes to the subject.

51. Provision in mathematics has improved since the last inspection due, in no small measure, to the very good subject leader. She has improved tracking systems and the high quality information that this gives helps to target children for additional lessons or to extend their understanding by grouping children of a similar ability. The leader acts as a very good role model and helps other teachers to implement new strategies for raising children's achievement.

52. A number of very effective groups have been created, which allow teachers and assistants to provide work pitched at just the right level for children. Staff deployment is very effective, with those with expert subject knowledge teaching groups of children from a number of

classes very well. The infectious enthusiasm of these teachers rubs off on children and most thoroughly enjoy their lessons.

53. Teaching is very good overall. Resources are used very well. In particular, the use of interactive white boards helps to grab children's attention and the software used demonstrates new concepts very effectively. Other learning aids, such as wipe boards and a very good range of mathematical equipment, are having a positive impact on the extent to which children take an active part in lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Teachers use mathematics across the curriculum well. There are many good examples in geography and in science but they are largely limited to measurement and data handling. Few examples of calculation or problem solving were found in other areas of the curriculum and in discussion with children, they found it difficult to recall examples.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6 children achieve very well in this subject.
- Children are encouraged to learn specific scientific vocabulary and use investigative skills.
- Assessment information is very well used to target support at children who are not achieving.
- The school recognises the need to further develop opportunities to enhance the use of thinking skills in science.
- The curriculum is enriched extremely well
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good

Commentary

55. Standards in science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above those expected for their age. Although the school's science results show a downward trend, the school demonstrates that pupils' achievement is very good. The school works hard to overcome significant barriers to learning and this ensures that the children make very good progress. Children with special educational needs perform exceptionally due to the excellent support they receive. Good use is made of numeracy skills in science teaching. Children in Year 6, for example, were challenged to interpret data in order to answer science questions.
56. Teaching and learning are very good. The children are encouraged to use and learn scientific vocabulary. Staff use a practical approach to teach science and this helps to keep the children interested and eager to find out more. Resources are very well used; this includes very good use of the interactive whiteboards in teaching. Children show a good knowledge of all aspects of science. Children apply this knowledge well to scientific enquiry in which they ask questions, plan, investigate and use a range of skills to test their ideas. In Year 6 children made reasoned predictions and ensured a fair test. In this lesson children were challenged very effectively and could explain what they were learning. The school could, however further develop thinking skills in science throughout the school. This approach would help to support the investigative approach that the school uses well and enable the children to have increased opportunities to develop the correct use of scientific language.
57. Discussion with children shows that they are interested and enthusiastic about learning in science. Children are able to recall their learning and talk accurately about their work. Children are clear about what they needed to do in order to improve in science. The school has developed a very effective system of assessment where children evaluate their skills and understanding followed by their teacher making an assessment. Scrutiny of children's

work shows that they make good progress because of the good coverage of the science curriculum.

58. The school provides excellent opportunities for enrichment activities in relation to science. The school grounds are well used to support the science curriculum. An environmental group meet at lunchtime with a member of staff and care for the school grounds and pond area. The school organises events throughout the year which support the development of knowledge and skills in science.
59. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader has very good subject knowledge and uses effective assessment and tracking systems. These systems enable the school to provide additional support to children who are not making enough progress. This is particularly effective in Year 6. The subject leader has clear evidence of monitoring within the subject. There are very good systems for analysing results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 to highlight strengths and areas for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for Information and Communication Technology is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent support from the ICT technician leads to very good achievement
- Children learn their skills very well due to very good timetabling arrangements
- ICT skills are taught through a variety of other subjects, lending meaning
- There are too few computers for pupils to work on in classrooms and as a result, children do not yet have enough opportunity to apply their learned skills in other lessons

Commentary

60. In Years 2 and 6 Year 6, standards in ICT match those expected nationally. An increasing number of children are exceeding these expectations, and some are working at a level well above this. Most teachers have a good level of competency and understanding about the teaching of ICT, but the excellent support given by the ICT technician means that there are few limits to what children can achieve. Many older children arrive at school well before the start of lessons to work on their individual projects, they are seen in the computer suite at break times and lunch times, and have the opportunity to work after school. Children in Year 6 are very skilled in their use of a commercial program to present work from current topics or their own interests, and can quickly change these and develop them, explaining in full how they are doing this, at a very high level standard. Younger children in Year 2 are learning to present their findings in graphs and spreadsheets, and are beginning to make choices about the kinds of graphs to use, and what they should look like.

61. Very good timetabling arrangements as a result of very good leadership of the subject, mean that children are taught new skills over a whole week, enabling them to both reinforce and develop what is being taught. They are taught dually by the class teacher and the ICT technician very well, and this high level of support ensures that all can progress at their own individual level of ability, and, as a result, their achievement is very good. Information and Communication Technology skills are taught through the medium of other subjects, which lends meaning and helps children to understand the use of ICT across the curriculum. For example, when learning about graphs and spreadsheets children used maths and investigated the spread of birthdays across their class. Older children learned presentation skills to show their work in history or geography.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. The computer suite is a very good resource for children, and is enhanced by a smaller suite based near the Year 3 classrooms. A set of note book computers are used very well and the

school has good plans to expand this resource. However, there are currently insufficient computers in classrooms, and as a result, children do not apply their skills on a consistent basis. For example, children may learn spreadsheets and how to convert these into graphs, but these learned skills are not always retained fully as they are not able to apply them regularly.

HUMANITIES

Geography and History

63. Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement on provision in geography and history. However, standards in **geography** match the national expectation. Given the low starting point on entry to the school the children make very good progress in their learning. By the time they reach Year 6, children show they have developed good subject knowledge and skills. Teaching and learning are very good. Very effective challenge for all children means that they are interested and engaged with their learning. In Year 4, children are able to compare the differences between their own locality and that of Chembakolli, an Indian village, for example, identifying the differences in schooling. Teaching reinforces the use of accurate geographical vocabulary. Evidence from discussion with children and work scrutiny shows the good development of geographical skills and vocabulary. Year 4 children explain the differences between different types of settlements and identify possible locations for a new settlement giving reasons for their decision. They describe settlements using a good range of geographical vocabulary. Year 6 children talk in depth about their knowledge of rivers. Year 6 discussed their independent research work about rivers and their preparation for a presentation of their findings to other children in the class enthusiastically.
64. Standards in **history** match the national expectation and children achieve very well, given their low starting points. By the time they reach Year 3, children use secondary sources of evidence to answer historical questions. Year 6 children pose historical questions and are able to identify possible sources of evidence to answer these questions. Teaching demonstrates good subject knowledge and questioning skills. As a result children are engaged and interested in their learning. Year 3 children use photographs and written extracts to make suggestions about individuals who are being evacuated. Pupils' responses show an ability to empathise with others through using photographs, for example, 'The little boy looks confused because he is too young to understand'. This response demonstrates a good understanding of previous learning related to evacuation in World War 2. Evidence from discussion with children and work scrutiny show the good development of pupils' historical skills and vocabulary. By Year 6, children use knowledge and skills in order to write an argument based on an historical issue, for example, presenting an argument relating to the education of girls in Ancient Greece. This work demonstrates good links with English work.

Religious education

Provision in Religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership of the subject has led to good improvements since the last inspection
 - Very good teaching in the one lesson observed helps children to achieve
65. Evidence from talking with children, clearly indicates that the strengths noted by the previous inspection have been maintained and extended. A good range of resources supports a strong focus on learning about a range of world faiths and an improved curriculum combines the qualities of the national framework and the local Agreed Syllabus with a rich programme of visits and visitors related to Christianity and other faiths. By the end of Year 6, children discuss with lively and well-informed interest the similarities and differences between major faiths such as Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity. Very effective links with daily collective

worship, personal social and health education, and the school's imaginative themed work in Choices Week and Multi-cultural Days all reinforce children's active interest and growing understanding. The subject makes a strong contribution to children's personal development, especially its spiritual, moral and cultural aspects all these qualities and effects point to very good improvement and very effective leadership and management of the subject. Development planning is very good.

66. In the lesson observed, a class of children in Year 4 achieved very well because of very good teaching. An imaginative and well-structured use of interesting resources and activities challenged and stimulated the children to understand the meaning of puja in Hinduism. They also learned, through lively practical involvement, the wider understanding that worship often draws on practices we use in our everyday lives.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. Too few lessons were seen to judge provision in art and design, design and technology music and physical education. Only three lessons were seen in art and design, two in design and technology and one in music. Other evidence from previous work and discussions with pupils was collected.

68. Available evidence in **art and design** suggests that standards match the national expectation for children in Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is good. Children have good opportunities to explore painting, observational drawing, printing, textiles and clay work. They broaden their cultural awareness and develop their creative skills as they learn about the work and techniques of a range of artists and craftsmen from different times and cultures. Teachers' planning is focused on the development of skills and there are good systems in place to track children's progress as they move through the school. However, the use of sketch books for children to collect and express ideas, or for teachers to assess children's work, is limited. Teaching was good overall in the three lessons seen. Children worked very well collaboratively and showed very good levels of concentration on the tasks set, resulting in good productivity in learning. However, there were missed opportunities for children to evaluate their own work and that of others and to suggest possible improvements. In the Year 5 lessons, children had limited opportunities to develop their own creativity because of the use of templates. However, good links are made to other subjects such as English, geography, science and religious education. Visits to a local art gallery, work with artists in residence and the well attended art, craft and sketch clubs enrich the curriculum effectively. Initiatives, such as the Creativity Day, successfully enable children from different classes to work together on a given theme using mixed media. Artwork is attractively displayed throughout the school, effectively celebrating pupils' achievement and creating a stimulating learning environment. Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

69. The development plan for **design and technology** is very good. It focuses imaginatively on whole-school priorities, such as thinking skills, the needs of gifted and talented children and the use of ICT to support learning, and outlines convincingly how these can be promoted through work in design and technology. The lesson seen in Year 1 was good, and showed very clearly how, by innovative cross-curricular planning related to a space theme, learning in design and technology can support and be supported by learning in other subjects. The teacher made effective use of story and information books and other excellent resources to interest, inform and provide relevant language for pupils, before they began the task of making a model of a space shuttle. A very good lesson with a Year 6 class made challenging use of children's skills and understandings in science and mathematics to extend their understanding of complex aspects of the process of design. The teacher's dynamic approach and demanding questions reinforced earlier learning, and required and enabled children to carry out and record a practical investigation into the relative durability of different materials. The children then brought their results together and analysed their data to decide which materials had the right properties for different parts of slippers. The lesson

illustrated very well the high quality of curricular provision for the subject. It also showed that, by the end of Year 6, children reach the expected level in their understanding of the design process. Successful craft clubs and craft days enhance these strengths and provide good opportunities for creative work in a range of materials and situations.

70. The Year 1 lesson observed in **music** was excellent. There were very good opportunities to collaborate, which promoted children's spoken language and musical vocabulary very well. The class teacher made highly effective links to their 'space' project and as a result, all children were enthralled as they listened to music and then went on to compose their own, using the very good resources in the computer room. The technician supported the lesson very well, and as a result, all children made rapid progress, reaching levels above the national expectation. One group of children, for example, used the words 'beats, count and rests' accurately and with confidence. Others knew there were eight beats in their bar and that a space represented a 'silent beat'. This lesson was an excellent example of how the school has successfully combined areas of the curriculum to promote high achievement through creating exciting contexts for learning.

71. In the **physical education** lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was at least good, and often very good. There is often a good emphasis on thinking as well as doing, with the aim of improving and evaluating performance. Skills are very well taught because of the expertise of teachers, who model well, and use a range of positive comments to teach strategies to improve throwing, catching and jumping techniques. Children's attitudes to physical education are very good and they are lively, enthusiastic and interested. They work very well with each other and with the teacher, and this helps them when working collaboratively or in teams. They have high expectations of themselves because of continual positive reinforcement from teachers, and are able to improve their skills well within lessons because of a good balance of theory and practice. As part of its provision to educate children about their own health, the school ensures that all children have about two hours each week for physical activity. Restrictions to the use of the school hall means that one session each week is taught outside, but teachers have good contingency plans for poor weather. For example, if the weather is too wet to go outside, children will learn about the rules of a game, watch a sports video to reinforce their skills or learn more about the health benefits of exercise. The school makes good use of the grounds to provide a wide range of physical activities, including football, cross country, orienteering and netball, and a 'trim trail' – a set of outdoor equipment designed to promote fitness - for older children. They also have the opportunity to learn judo, dance and gymnastics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

72. Insufficient direct teaching was seen to make an overall provision judgement, but it is clear that there are some outstanding elements of citizenship that promote children's future economic well-being extremely well. The school's 'Choices' Week gives children outstanding opportunities to consider what the future might bring and has an outstanding influence in raising children's aspirations. The excellent and innovative approach to linking themes, religious studies and future career opportunities teaches children their rights and responsibilities in an outstanding way and the resulting ethos that pervades the school is one of high achievement through ambition and hard work. The head teacher's unwavering dedication to the use of business links and worldwide learning networks is the major factor in children seeing their futures in a positive light.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	1

How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the school	1

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	1
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	1
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1

The leadership and management of the school	1
The governance of the school	1
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	1

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