

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST RAINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

West Rainton, Houghton le Spring

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114128

Headteacher: Mrs J. M. Westgarth

Lead inspector: Mr A Margerison

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 April 2005

Inspection number: 268228

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	112
School address:	West Rainton Houghton le Spring Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	DH4 6RN
Telephone number:	0191 584 3805
Fax number:	0191 584 5047
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Marsh
Date of previous inspection:	3 May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of West Rainton near Durham. The school mainly serves the village, although a few parents choose to bring their children to the school from the neighbouring area. The village is made up of a mix of housing, but has suffered in recent years from significant levels of unemployment, so that recent census data shows that, although pupils' backgrounds vary, overall their socio-economic circumstances are below average. The school is smaller than most primary schools and currently has 112 pupils on roll aged between four and 11 years. When children start school, although their attainment varies, baseline assessment shows that attainment is below that expected. It is very low in communication, language and literacy, with few children working at above the expected levels for their age. Overall, the number of pupils who join and leave the school during the school year is above average, with only 77 per cent of pupils in last years Year 6 group having been at the school throughout their schooling. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties, is below average. Currently, there are no pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs. The majority of pupils are of White-British origin, but the village has a permanent site for Traveller families and currently ten per cent of pupils come from this community. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Since the last inspection, the teaching staff has changed completely. All the teachers, including the headteacher, have joined the school in the interim period. The school was awarded the School Achievement Award in 2003, Basic Skills Award in 2002 and the Healthy Schools Award in 2004. It is involved in the Sports' Co-ordinator Development programme and is a Family Learning Centre. The school has an independent pre-school based on the premises which many of the children who join the reception class attend. From September 2005, the school will have the only provision for health and social services in the village and the surrounding area, called the Leamside Child Care Centre situated in part of the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21666	Mr A Margerison	Lead inspector	Geography History The Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language
32678	Mrs K Dodd	Lay inspector	
18370	Mr K Johnson	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education
21243	Mrs L Moore	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Music Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

West Rainton Primary School is a good, very caring school with a number of very good and outstanding features. The climate for learning is very good and, owing to good teaching, pupils achieve well to reach average standards overall in Year 6. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher has extremely high aspirations and leads the school with a very clear sense of purpose.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good.
- The teaching is good with a high proportion of very good teaching, particularly in the upper years of the school.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- Across the school, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to consolidate and reinforce all aspects of their literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- Adults have excellent relationships with pupils and consistently very high expectations of their behaviour, so that pupils develop a very clear understanding of right and wrong.
- Activities in lessons do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to make choices about their learning and to work independently.
- Procedures to involve pupils in the work of the school are very effective.

Improvement has been very good since the last inspection in May 1999 when the school had a significant number of areas of weakness. Pupils are now achieving well owing to very much better teaching. Standards are rising and all pupils, except a few with significant special educational needs, are at nationally expected levels or above. Assessment procedures are in place across all subjects. Governors play an active role in school improvement planning, which gives a very clear view of the future development of the school. All statutory requirements are met in full.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is good throughout the school, including that of pupils with special educational needs and those from Traveller families. Children in reception achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development so that most are likely to reach the expected national targets by the time they start Year 1, with at least half exceeding the targets. In their communication, language and literacy skills, children achieve well, but owing to their very low start in this area of their learning when they begin school, most are unlikely to reach the expected levels. Children's language skills also affect standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world, in which, despite achieving well, standards are below those expected. However, in their mathematical development they achieve well and most are working at the expected levels for their age. In the 2004 national tests, the school's results for pupils in Year 2 were below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics when compared to those of all schools. They were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics when compared to those of similar schools. However, the trend in the school's results is above the national pattern and this is reflected in the standards in the current Year 2. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well and standards in the current group are average in reading, writing and science and above average in mathematics. They are in line with those expected in ICT and religious education.

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

science	E	E	C	A
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Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

The school's results in the 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 6 are shown in the table above. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving well and standards overall are better than in 2004. Standards in English, overall, are average, although standards in pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. However, in mathematics, standards are above average and in science well above average. Standards in ICT and religious education are in line with those expected. No judgements on standards could be made in other subjects or areas of learning.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good overall, although behaviour of the oldest pupils is excellent. The vast majority of pupils attend school very regularly, but despite the school's good procedures to promote the importance of good attendance, a few parents persist in frequently taking their children out of school for occasional days. As a result, overall, attendance is well below average. Punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good and leads to pupils' good achievement. **Teaching and learning are good in all classes.** Throughout the school, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and use questions very effectively to involve pupils in lessons. Most lessons are very brisk and support staff are used very well to work with groups of pupils. This very effectively offsets the potential difficulties of mixed age classes in reception and Years 1 and 2 and ensures pupils make consistently good progress. Lessons are very well managed and the work of all adults reflects the school's approaches to managing pupils' behaviour and to rewarding their achievements. Teaching makes a very significant contribution to pupils' personal development and self-confidence. However, activities do not always give pupils enough opportunities to initiate their own ideas or to work independently with some tasks too directed by adults. In addition, pupils' literacy and ICT skills are not developed and used sufficiently in all subjects. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress are very effective and the information is used very well to track the progress pupils are making and to involve them in evaluating their own learning. The school provides pupils with very good support, advice and guidance and involves them very well in its work and development. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The partnership with parents is very good and there are good links with other schools and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well and her extremely clear vision for the school is reflected in all aspects of its work. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and together they are excellent role models for other staff, successfully creating an extremely strong ethos of teamwork in the school. Other subject leaders in the school fulfil their roles well. The governance of the school is good and ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school. The school has been very successful in establishing very good relationships with parents and they are particularly pleased with the way the school deals with any ideas or concerns they may have. Pupils are very positive about the school and have no significant concerns.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- encourage pupils to learn through working both independently and collaboratively and taking a more active role in planning their own learning.
- provide more systematically planned opportunities for pupils to use the full range of their literacy and ICT skills in other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The achievement of pupils is good throughout the school. Overall, standards are below those expected in reception and in line with those expected in Years 2 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in reception achieve very well in their personal and social development.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in science and very well in Years 5 and 6 to reach standards well above those expected by Year 6.
- Standards in mathematics are good in Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening throughout the school.

Commentary

1. Children enter the reception class with levels of attainment below those expected in most of the areas of learning, except in their communication, language and literacy skills, which are well below those typical for their age. Importantly, very few start school working at levels above those expected in any area of learning. Overall, children achieve well in reception, although in their personal, social and emotional development they achieve very well owing to very good teaching in this area of learning. As a result, most children are already working at the expected levels and a good proportion are on course to exceed these by the end of reception. In their communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world children achieve well, although few are likely to reach the expected standard by the end of reception year. Their skills in basic reading and writing develop well, but standards overall are adversely affected by their limited vocabulary and communication skills. This also affects standards in children's knowledge and understanding of the world. In this area of learning, although children achieve well, most will not reach the expected levels for their age by the end of reception. However, in their mathematical development, where this factor is not as important, most children are on course to reach the standards typical for their age. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on children's achievement or standards in their creative and physical development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (16.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.9 (15.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.2 (16.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Overall, standards in Years 2 and 6 are better than at the last inspection. At that time pupils' progress was judged to be satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in reading and writing. As they move through the school, pupils are now achieving well and standards are at least in line with those expected in all subjects with particular strengths in mathematics and science.
3. The school has placed a very strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning in recent years and this is beginning to pay dividends, with standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 improving at a rate above the national trend. This was recognised in 2003 by the school receiving the School Achievement award. In 2004, although results

were below average in reading and writing when compared to those of all schools, they were average in mathematics. When compared to those of similar schools, the results were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. An important factor in this was the very high proportion of pupils who reached the expected level in all three subjects (in mathematics this placed the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally), but the main difference between the subjects was the proportion who reached the higher than expected level. In mathematics it was broadly average, but in reading and writing it was well below average. This reflects the very low language skills that children have when they start school.

4. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, so that standards are continuing to rise, particularly in reading and writing, which are broadly in line with those expected. Standards in mathematics are above average. Pupils achieve well in science and most are working at the expected levels for their age. In ICT, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly in line with those expected, as they are in religious education, but in this subject pupils achieve well owing to good teaching. As a result, pupils develop a good awareness of different religions and cultures for their age.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (24.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.2 (26.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.6 (27.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were very much improved on the previous year in English and science. From being well below average in 2003, they rose to be average when compared to those of all schools. However, the results in mathematics fell to be well below average. As a result of these fluctuations over time, the trend in the school's results is below the national pattern. This mainly reflects variations in different year groups, but can be attributed to the lower proportion of pupils who reached the higher than expected level in mathematics than did so in English or science. However, when compared to those of similar schools, the results were well above average in English and science and average in mathematics. These results are reflected in the value-added indicators for those pupils who were at the school throughout this period, which show that they achieved very well compared to their starting point.
6. Current Year 6 pupils attained results in their national tests in Year 2 that were below average in reading and well below average in writing. In mathematics they were average. Inspection evidence shows that, despite significant numbers of pupils joining the school in Years 3 to 6, current pupils in Year 6 are achieving well to reach standards, overall, in line with those expected. With the exception of a few pupils with significant special educational needs, all pupils are working at the expected levels for their age, with a significant proportion well on course to reach the higher than expected levels in their national tests in English, mathematics and science.
7. In English, standards in speaking and listening are good due to the good range of activities, particularly in the upper years of the school, which provide opportunities for pupils to discuss what they are doing and to think about challenging issues such as drug abuse in personal, social and health education lessons. The very systematic approach to developing pupils' basic literacy skills in English lessons has a very positive effect on pupils' understanding of how to structure and organise their writing so that in this aspect of the subject they achieve well. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to fully exploit these skills in other subjects, such as geography and history. This has a negative effect on pupils' ability to express their views and opinions through their writing and on standards of English overall.

8. Standards in mathematics are above average and pupils are achieving well. In science, achievement is good overall, and very good in Years 5 and 6. As a result, pupils are on course to reach standards well above those expected for their age. In both subjects this is due to the strong emphasis teachers place on developing pupils' investigative skills so they are well able to use their basic subject knowledge and skills. In religious education, pupils are achieving satisfactorily to reach standards in line with those expected, although there are particular strengths in their knowledge of different faiths. As a result, they are well prepared to live in a culturally diverse society. In ICT, standards are in line with those expected and pupils achieve well. However, there are variations across the strands of the subject. For example, in word processing and multi-media presentations, pupils' skills are very good, but their understanding of how to handle data to produce graphs and charts is less secure. This is due to the relatively recent improvements made to the school's ICT facilities, which have not yet had time to have a significant effect on pupils' skills in this area and the fewer opportunities pupils have to use these skills in other subjects.
9. Pupils from Traveller backgrounds achieve well owing to the very good relationships the school has established with the Traveller community, the systems that have been established to provide pupils with work when they are not in school and the close relationship the school has with the local education authority Traveller Support Service. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved significantly over recent years and parents have come to recognise the value of education and learning as important for their children. Although not all pupils with special educational needs are working at the expected levels for their age owing to their difficulties in learning, they achieve well because of the good help they receive from teachers and support assistants. The few pupils at an early stage of learning English also achieve well for a similar reason.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities are very good. Pupils' attendance is well below average, but their punctuality to school is good. They have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils are excellent and they develop a very good understanding of what is right and wrong. As a result, the behaviour of the oldest pupils is excellent.
- Pupils develop a high respect for the feelings and values of others and gain a very good insight into the traditions of other cultures, particularly that of the Traveller community.
- The school has extremely effective procedures to develop pupils' self-confidence.
- Despite the school's effective procedures to promote the importance of good attendance, a few parents continue to take their children out of school for occasional days.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

10. The above figures show that the school's attendance record is well below the national average. However, since the last inspection, when attendance was at a similar level, the underlying reasons behind the figures have changed significantly. At that time, it was attributed to the amount of time that children from Traveller families had off school in the summer months. This is not the case now. The school has worked very closely with the Traveller Support Service and the families so that the attendance of these pupils has improved significantly and they have minimal effect on the overall absence figures. Rather it is a small number of families, who, despite the good procedures the school has in place to promote attendance among pupils and parents and the best efforts of the Educational Welfare Service, persist in taking their children out of school for occasional days on a regular basis. As a result, given a small school where each pupil is equivalent to nearly one per cent of the overall attendance, figures for the current year show that there has been little improvement this year and attendance is still well below the national average of 2003/04. However, pupils really enjoy being at school and, with very few exceptions, they arrive promptly for school and the start of lessons.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	96	1	0
White – Irish	14	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0

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

11. In lessons, pupils show very good attitudes to their work, their classmates and their teachers. This begins in reception, where adults are very consistent in their expectations of children and teach them the difference between right and wrong and how to behave in school. As a result, by the end of reception, most children achieve very well in this aspect of their learning. These very high expectations and the very effective use by adults of the school's procedures to reward and recognise pupils' personal skills, in addition to their academic successes, are a very consistent feature in all classes. Consequently, as they grow older, pupils grow in self-confidence and want to learn so that by Year 6, they are able to work very sensibly, concentrate on the task in hand and achieve good results.
12. Behaviour is also very good, which is an improvement from the last inspection, when a few pupils disrupted the learning of others. The one exclusion in the last year was a pupil who has significant behavioural difficulties. The school is working closely with the child's parents and the behaviour support service and good progress is being made to meet his needs. In fact, the behaviour of the oldest pupils during the inspection was exemplary and they were a credit to themselves, the school and their parents. They respond extremely well to the very high expectations of the adults, are very enthusiastic when answering questions, concentrate very well and, when they are given the opportunity, enjoy working in pairs and small groups. In the most interesting lessons, they become so engrossed in the work that they don't want to stop. Occasionally, when the pace of a lesson drops or the task is not quite matched well enough or vibrant enough to stimulate their imaginations, a few pupils lose their concentration slightly, but this rarely detracts from the very positive learning atmosphere that is a feature of the school.
13. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Assemblies give pupils a chance to think about others and their role as part of the school community. In lessons, they learn about different faiths and cultures and how they affect the

way people live. The school has been particularly successful in involving members of the Travelling community in this aspect of pupils' development. Each year classes visit the local Traveller site to find out what life is like for their friends who live there. However, the school also celebrates the traditions of the few Chinese children in school through displays and inviting them to talk about their culture to their classmates. In addition, the school also makes every effort to educate pupils about different religions through visits and visiting speakers. As a result, pupils develop a very high respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others and an appreciation of other cultures. This is reflected in the excellent relationships between pupils in lessons, at lunchtime and when they are playing outside. Pupils and parents reported no concerns about bullying or harassment and parents from all groups within school are very pleased with the way the school develops their children's personal skills.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The school places a strong emphasis on establishing positive links with parents and on ensuring that pupils are very well supported and these aspects play a very significant role in the development of the school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers use questions very well to involve pupils and to maintain a very brisk pace to lessons.
- Support staff are used very effectively by teachers and they make a very good contribution to the progress pupils make.
- Activities in lessons do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to work on their own or encourage them to use their own initiative.
- Procedures to assess the progress pupils are making are very thorough and the information is used very well to track the progress pupils are making.
- The school is innovative in its approach to matching activities in lessons to how pupils learn best.
- Specialist teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' achievement.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	5	15	6	0	0	0

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

14. As can be seen from the table above, the quality of teaching is good and includes a significantly high proportion of very good and outstanding teaching. This is very good improvement since the last inspection and has been brought about by changes in staffing supported by very good leadership. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school, but particularly strong in the upper years of the school where teaching and learning are a real partnership between teachers and pupils.
15. Teachers have good subject knowledge with particular strengths in the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in English and mathematics lessons. This reflects the very strong emphasis the leadership of the school has placed on this aspect of pupils' learning in order to raise standards. The school has recently been working on identifying the learning styles of each pupil and balancing activities in lessons to reflect the variation across the class. This is particularly effective higher up the school where pupils are aware of their own learning

style and understand what it means for them. The effect of this approach on teachers'

planning and pupils' achievement was particularly noticeable during the inspection in mathematics lessons where a good balance of practical, visual and oral activities gave all pupils, irrespective of their learning style, good opportunities to learn and reinforce new skills.

16. Teachers' very effective use of questions in class discussions and the sharing of lesson objectives with pupils ensure that lessons are very brisk and that pupils are fully involved in lessons and clearly understand what they are learning about. In most of these discussions, teachers and support staff are not content to accept the first answer that pupils give, but use follow up questions very well to encourage pupils to expand upon their thoughts and to challenge their understanding. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 are particularly adept at this technique, which has very significant effect on pupils' speaking skills. Occasionally, lower down the school teachers do not target questions well enough so a few less confident pupils are able to avoid being involved, but this is relatively infrequent. Teachers have very high expectations of work and of behaviour and pupils respond very well, their very good attitudes to work assisting in their learning. Pupils at all levels of attainment work very hard so they make good progress in their learning. As a result, lessons have a very positive learning atmosphere.
17. Teachers make very effective use of support staff to work with groups of pupils and individuals with learning difficulties. This is particularly effective in the teaching of literacy and numeracy in reception and Years 1 and 2, where the teachers plan the use of support staff very carefully to offset the potential disadvantages of having pupils of mixed ages in their classes. Classes are split into year groups, with the support staff taking one year group and the teacher the other. As a result, the work the pupils do is well matched to their needs and they achieve well. The quality of teaching by the support staff is good and, overall, they make a very significant contribution to the progress pupils make. However, the range of opportunities provided for pupils to work independently and to use their own initiative in other lessons is variable. Activities, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics, are sometimes controlled too much by adults, or are insufficiently varied, which limits the scope for pupils, particularly the more able, to extend their own learning through their own writing, additional research or investigations. This has a negative effect on pupils' ability to use and apply the full range of their literacy and ICT skills.
18. Specialist teachers from within the school and outside are used well and the two excellent lessons were both examples of this. For example, a teacher funded by an Arts Council project was in school working with Year 5 pupils teaching them Indian dance. This session was very well guided by the class teacher, but the expertise of the visiting teacher ensured that pupils not only made excellent progress in a very short time in developing their skills, but also developed a much deeper understanding of the symbolism of the movements and the cultural meanings of the dance. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm were excellent and, although a few pupils were initially hesitant, the class teacher and the visiting teacher encouraged them and they quickly forgot their inhibitions and joined in along with the rest of their classmates.
19. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good progress in developing systems to assess pupils' learning. Very comprehensive records are kept and specific tasks and tests used regularly to track the progress pupils are making. The information is used very well to identify those pupils who may need extra help with their learning and to set them targets for improvement. However, a major strength is the way the school progressively involves pupils in their learning as they move through the school. As a result, the oldest pupils really understand what it is they are working on and aiming to achieve in order to reach the next level. Teachers' marking and feedback to pupils frequently reflect these targets so they know how well they are doing.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. The opportunities for enrichment are good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The personal, social and health education programme makes a very significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The curriculum does not exploit the potential links between subjects sufficiently to develop pupils' skills in all aspects of English and ICT.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, although pupils' individual plans are not used consistently to plan activities in lessons.
- The proportion of pupils, particularly from Years 3 to 6, who take part in activities at lunchtime and after school is very good.

Commentary

20. The curriculum has improved well since the last inspection. It is carefully organised to ensure that pupils in Years 1 to 6 are provided with a broad range of activities that develops their understanding and attributes in all aspects of the National Curriculum and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education well. A major strength of the curriculum is the personal, social and health education programme that the school has developed to reflect the needs of its pupils. The strong emphasis that the school places on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding in this area was recognised in 2004 when the school received the Healthy School award. Sex, alcohol and drugs education are an integral part of the programme. Two staff have been trained in drugs education and the school works closely with the local health visitors and the local medical practice. As part of this project, in 2004, Year 6 pupils designed a teaching pack to raise pupils' understanding of these issues; this will be completed by current pupils and published for other schools to use. Class discussions are a major element of lessons and so the programme makes a very important contribution to improving pupils' speaking and listening skills as well as their personal development.
21. Pupils' work shows that there are plenty of activities that enable them to develop their skills and understanding of the different subjects, including French, which the school has recently introduced as part of its commitment to broadening pupils' awareness of different cultures. However, although there are some good examples, teachers' planning does not routinely exploit the potential links between different subjects to reinforce pupils' understanding or provide them with enough opportunities to use the full range of their literacy and ICT skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 have produced some good 'PowerPoint' presentations on mountain ranges, but these were produced within a tight brief that limited the scope for pupils to develop their own lines of enquiry and few examples of graphs or data handling are evident in science or geography portfolios. As a result, pupils do not reinforce their understanding of how to use the skills they learn in English and ICT lessons.
22. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special needs co-ordinator now has the time to manage the provision very effectively, so the procedures to identify pupils who need support, to review their progress and to involve pupils and parents in the process are very good. As a result, pupils' individual plans clearly identify what they need to learn and in broad terms how it could be taught. However, the school has recognised that these plans are not yet used enough by teachers as an integral part of their lesson planning to provide very specific activities and the good progress pupils make is mainly due to the very effective support they receive from support staff.

23. The curriculum is enriched well by the range of visitors to school, visits pupils make and the clubs at lunchtimes and after school. These cover many subjects and there is a good emphasis on creative and musical activities in addition to a good range of sports. The number of pupils who take part is very good and, as a result, pupils' skills in these areas are reinforced well. Specialist coaches in, for example, basketball provide specific clubs to supplement what the school is able to provide and broaden the experiences and skills of pupils effectively.
24. The curriculum for children in reception is appropriately based on the national guidance. As with pupils with special educational needs, the contribution of support staff is a major strength, so children have plenty of opportunities to work with an adult. Resources are good, but many activities are very adult led and children do not always have enough opportunities in lessons to explore and investigate for themselves or to reinforce what they learn in literacy and numeracy sessions through linked 'play' activities. As result, although overall they achieve very well in their personal development, by the time they join Year 1, a significant proportion of children are still very dependent upon an adult to give them guidance and support.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Support and guidance for pupils are very good. The school has very good procedures to involve pupils in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent.
- Arrangements to settle children into school in reception and to support pupils new to the school are very good.
- Pupils are given very good levels of personal and academic support.
- Pupils' views are seen as very important and they are involved in many aspects of the school's work.

Commentary

25. Health, safety and pupils' well-being are very high in the school's priorities and parents are very confident that the school takes good care of their children. The headteacher and chair of governors co-ordinate the health and safety procedures, which cover all aspects of site safety, fire drills, school trips and first aid. The headteacher is also the named person with responsibility for child protection. These aspects are very well organised and the vast majority of staff have a clear understanding of who is responsible for the key aspects of child welfare and what to do if they have any concerns.
26. One of the strongest features of the school that helps create its very positive ethos is the excellent relationships between adults and pupils. This starts in reception when children first join the school. Without exception, parents are pleased with these arrangements and, as a result, children settle very quickly into school routines and learn how they are expected to behave and respond to each other. The very close links with the private pre-school on the school site make a very important contribution to this process. For example, staff work closely together in planning activities and children are able to mix with older children from school before they start. However, the school has also established very effective procedures to support pupils who join the school during the course of the school year and to welcome those from Travelling families who return to the school. When new pupils arrive, their learning is assessed to make sure that if they need extra help it is provided and, in some cases, an induction programme is put into place with the help of the Traveller Support Service. This level of support is maintained throughout the school for all pupils and is reflected in the very good support provided in lessons for pupils who need specific support with their learning. However, this also extends to pupils' personal development. Again, without exception, pupils feel that if they have a problem they are confident that there will be an adult they can confide

in. The recent introduction of a system to reward pupils' personal achievements and to involve them in setting targets for themselves in this aspect of their development has further strengthened an already strong aspect of the school's work.

27. Pupils' views matter and are valued by the leadership of the school as very important. The school council is important to pupils and class councils provide a systematic structure which ensures that all pupils have very good opportunities to express their ideas and opinions. Recent achievements have included improving break times by recommending the purchase of play equipment, improving school meals and running a healthy tuckshop. The School Council was also involved in the recent appointment of the deputy headteacher and interviewed each candidate after deciding what sort of person they wanted for this very influential post in school. As a result of these procedures, pupils develop a very clear understanding of their role as a member of the community and they feel valued by the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established very good links with parents and good links with the community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has established very comprehensive and effective ways of seeking and acting on the views of parents.
- Procedures to deal with concerns of parents are very effective.
- Despite the school's best efforts few parents take advantage of the opportunities provided for them to become fully involved in their children's learning.
- Systems to prepare pupils for moving to secondary school are very good.

Commentary

28. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good progress in improving its links with parents. The information they are provided with about the work of the school is now fully compliant with statutory requirements in all areas and includes some other additional information regarding links with community and other educational partnerships. Although there are some missed opportunities to fully explain specific details, such as attendance statistics and national test results, parents say they feel very well informed through newsletters and noticeboards. They feel that reports on their children's progress allow them to see clearly how their children are doing. However, most importantly parents have confidence to approach the school with concerns and appreciate that the school is vigilant in raising concerns with them as they arise and do not wait until the next parents' evening. As a result of the approachability, the pro-active approach of staff and the way the school works with parents, issues arising are dealt with promptly and effectively, with suitable flexibility, and resolved to parents' satisfaction.
29. The school has made major efforts to involve parents more in the work of the school through parent questionnaires, Family Learning workshops and courses in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Those parents who attended describe them as 'brilliant'. Parents make a good contribution to their pupils' learning at home. However, despite the school's extensive efforts, including introducing homework files which explain how parents can help their children at home and give curriculum information, the number of parents who take an active part in the work of the school on a regular basis is low. Much of the burden of organising fundraising and other events, acting as parent governors and helping in school falls on the same people.

30. Following the last inspection, the school went through a period of instability which, parents say, affected its standing in the community. However, they report that, owing to the determination of the headteacher to seize any opportunity to take part in community events and to contribute to the daily life of the village, the school's reputation is improving rapidly. For example, pupils use the community as a resource in lessons and a community day with a World War II theme is imminent. Plans are well advanced to develop part of the school as a community resource, including health services and extending the community learning facilities to be called the Leamside Child Care Centre. The school has also continued to develop its links with other schools. It has close links with one secondary school in Durham that provides specialist teaching facilities in physical education and science. However, links are particularly strong with the school to which most pupils transfer when they leave at the end of Year 6, which has specialist performing art status. As result of this link, pupils take part in drama and musical productions with pupils from other schools, which has a positive effect on their skills in these aspects of their learning, their personal development and on their preparation for transfer to secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher's leadership of the school is very good and she is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Subject leaders fulfil their roles well. Governance of the school is good. The very good management systems are very effective in driving school improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good purposeful leadership from the headteacher has led to very substantial improvement in the work of the school since the last inspection.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are excellent role models for other staff and pupils.
- Self-evaluation procedures are highly effective and provide the school with a very strong basis to school improvement planning.
- The ethos of the school is very significantly enhanced by the close teamwork among all staff.
- Subject leaders of priority subjects fulfil their roles well.

Commentary

31. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and has successfully created a warm and very caring school in which pupils want to learn. Since the last inspection, she has very effectively steered the school firmly through a period of significant development, appointing new staff and imbuing them, parents and pupils with the conviction that they can achieve well. The headteacher has a very clear focus on raising standards and how this will be achieved. Quite rightly, her main emphasis to date has been on improving the standard of teaching and learning in English and mathematics in order to raise standards and achievement. Very important aspects of this have been the establishment of very secure systems to underpin teaching and learning, such as the procedures to assess pupils' progress, and the creation of a climate of recognising achievement and success. As a result, the school has made rapid progress in recent years and the improved standards in the current Years 2 and 6 show that these systems are beginning to have a positive effect. In the last six months, she has been very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and together they have established a very effective working relationship. They have complementary skills and are excellent role models for the other staff and pupils through their leadership and teaching. As a result, there is an ethos of teamwork throughout the school reflected in the very good relationships and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and improving standards. The school is very well placed to continue improving further.

32. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well and have given the headteacher their full support in shaping the school's future direction. They have established effective ways of evaluating school performance so that, after having problems recruiting a full complement, they are now an active and able group who have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are well placed to increase their influence within it. They have begun to take an active role in the instigation and direct management of school initiatives such as the Leamside Child Care Centre.
33. Subject leaders have clear roles and, because several staff have limited experience in this role, the school has provided training to help them develop their management skills. Much of the emphasis has been on core subjects of late and the subject leaders for English and mathematics have been very effective in developing the quality of provision in their subjects. However, where subjects are priorities for development, subject leaders, with the support of the head and deputy headteacher, fulfil their responsibilities effectively and progress in developing the curriculum and teaching is good. Since the last inspection, the importance of the special educational needs co-ordinator has been recognised, so she now has designated time, as part of her role as the deputy headteacher, to execute her responsibilities very effectively in this area.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	354,730	Balance from previous year	17,648
Total expenditure	347,837	Balance carried forward to the next	24,540
Expenditure per pupil	2,738		

* Audited accounts for 2004/05 were not yet available at the time of the inspection.

34. On a day-to-day basis the management of the school is very effective. The administrative staff play an important part in this, which releases the headteacher to be a constant presence around the school. Parents hold her in high regard and attribute the improvement in the school in recent years directly to her clear direction and determination. School development is supported by effective financial management in which spending is carefully evaluated and monitored by the headteacher and governors to make sure that the school gets best value from its resources. These procedures ensure that school development priorities identified through the excellent systems for evaluating the work of the school are financially realistic. The table above shows a carry forward slightly in excess of the nationally recommended maximum, but this included money for improvements to ICT resources that had been allocated, but not spent at that point in time. The self-evaluation procedures are based on very effective monitoring of teaching and learning, pupils' progress and the detailed analysis of performance data. The information is used very well to identify school priorities and staff training needs. As a result, the school improvement plan has a very clear long-term view and accurately identifies the immediate priorities for development. Performance management systems are an intrinsic part of this process, so all staff are accountable for their work as teachers and subject leaders. These procedures have been at the heart of the very good improvement since the last inspection by giving the senior management and governors the firm foundations for moving the school forward.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall, provision for children in reception is good. Children start the Foundation Stage in reception, with most children being aged four. The majority have a small amount of experience in the privately run pre-school situated on the school site. Nevertheless, when children start at school, baseline assessment information shows that their attainment is below that expected for their age in most of the areas of learning and well below that expected in their communication, language and literacy. In all the areas of learning very few children are working at levels above those expected for their age. As a result, the teacher has to work very hard to equip children with the basic skills of reading, writing, number and speaking, so that, despite achieving well, overall, standards are below those expected by the end of reception. Children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development.

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed by the co-ordinator, who has a clear view of the provision and what needs to be developed further. As a result, the provision has improved well since the last inspection. Although standards are not as good, pupils' achievement is similar. However, this is against a change in children's language levels when they start school, which are less well developed. In the interim, the most recent guidance for the Foundation Stage has been introduced well and assessment systems have been developed to provide very thorough and useful information to track pupils' progress and to identify those who need extra help. Recently, links with the private pre-school have improved well and the two teachers ensure that topics and work complement each other. At the time of the inspection, reception children were taught in a mixed age class including pupils from Year 1. Overall, teaching is good with particular strengths in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Support staff are used very well in these lessons to ensure that reception children are provided with a very good level of personal support and guidance. When they lead sessions in lessons, the quality of their work is good and they use the guidance provided by the class teacher well as the basis for their teaching.

There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on provision or achievement in children's physical and creative development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are likely to reach the expected levels for their age by the time they start Year 1.
- Relationships between adults and children are very good.
- Adults have very consistent expectations of children's behaviour and use school procedures very effectively.
- The organisation of some lessons does not consistently provide enough opportunities for children to practise self-initiated tasks.

Commentary

35. Teaching in this aspect is very good, so children achieve very well in their first year in school. Although they start school with levels of skills below those typical for their age, even at the time of the inspection many children were working at the expected level. The vast majority of children are likely to reach the expected level for their age in most of the aspects of their learning and a good proportion will exceed these levels.
36. The very good relationships between adults and children are at the heart of the good teaching, so children respond very positively to the encouragement of the adults to work and play with

each other. They leave their carers confidently and quickly settle into the tasks they are given. Adults use the school's procedures to manage and reward good behaviour very consistently, so all children behave well in lessons and outside in the playground. This sets the basis for the excellent behaviour seen in Years 5 and 6. However, although in most aspects of this area of learning children achieve very well, lessons do not consistently allow children to make choices about what they will do or to use their own initiative and work on their own. As a result, a significant proportion of children are dependent on adults and lack confidence when not given direct instructions and guidance.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The early skills of reading and writing are taught well.
- Pupils achieve well, although standards are likely to be below expectations by the end of the foundation stage.
- Adults do not consistently use questions well enough to draw all children into discussions.

Commentary

37. When they start school, few children know many letters or can write their own names. Their spoken vocabulary is limited and several have indistinct speech and imprecise pronunciation. However, owing to good teaching in literacy lessons, in which teachers and support staff place a very strong emphasis on developing children's basic skills, they make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of letter names and sounds.
38. In response to the low level of skills children have when they start, the school has recently changed the system it uses to teach this aspect of children's learning and, as a result, most children learn to recognise letters of the alphabet and link them to sounds. More able children learn to use their knowledge to sound out simple words and read simple books. They learn to form letters, write their own names and to hold a pencil correctly and more able children learn to write simple sentences, sometimes using full stops and capital letters. The parts of lessons where the class are taught together led by an adult are the most effective because adults use several different methods to reinforce children's understanding and they have a very clear understanding of what they want the children to learn. The resulting discussions are brisk and lively. However, although questions are used well to challenge children's understanding, on occasions they are not targeted well enough to individual children, so these sessions tend to be dominated by a few more articulate and confident children. Group activities which are led by an adult are also effective. They adjust and adapt the basic activities well to accommodate the learning needs of the children they are working with. However, activities for the children who are working on their own are not always matched well enough to the range of abilities and there are missed opportunities for children to use 'play' to explore and develop their imagination. As a result, although a few more able children reach the expected levels for their age, a significant proportion still lack confidence, particularly in their speaking skills, so that, overall the levels of language and communication are likely to be below those expected by the end of reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in developing basic number skills.
- Assessment information is used well to plan activities in lessons.

Commentary

39. Children's attainment is likely to be close to the expected standard by the time that they start Year 1. The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well. Standards are better in this aspect of their learning because children's language skills do not significantly affect their achievement. As a result, several children who lack confidence in literacy lessons and need a lot of encouragement to contribute to lessons are very enthusiastic, answer questions willingly and are keen to take part in activities.
40. Teaching has the same strengths as seen in the other areas of learning; there are very good management and relationships between adults and children and a very strong focus on basic knowledge. As a result, lessons are brisk and positive learning experiences for children, so they develop a secure understanding of numbers and counting. Most count confidently at least to ten and many beyond this. The majority sort and organise basic shapes and colours, with more able pupils beginning to do simple addition sums. The good range of methods used by adults to reinforce children's mathematical language in whole-class discussions results in most children having a sound knowledge of subject vocabulary such as 'more than', 'less than', 'lighter', 'bigger' and 'smaller'. Teachers and support staff assess children's learning well using questions and use the information carefully to provide well-matched activities in lessons when children are working directly with an adult. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to learn and reinforce their understanding through games and activities around the classroom when they have completed the essential parts of their tasks and when they are working without the help of an adult.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and places a very strong emphasis on developing children's vocabulary.
- Teachers' planning makes good use of the resources and facilities.
- Not enough opportunities are provided in lessons for children to record their own ideas.

Commentary

41. Children are given good opportunities to find out more about the world around them both in the classroom and outdoors; for example, in a lesson looking at how materials changed when they were heated and mixed, the support assistant worked very effectively with children to make a cake. She placed a very strong emphasis on the language and encouraged children to talk about what they were doing and experiencing. However, children's limited vocabulary restricted their ability to explain their ideas and to grasp exactly what was happening. They develop basic ICT skills and learn that they can control events using a mouse and keyboard. Through looking at toys they begin to develop an understanding of how things change over time. The teacher places a good emphasis on developing children's investigative skills, such as conducting a traffic survey outside school, but much of the written work in children's books is worksheet based with very little variation between the tasks provided for children of different abilities, which restricts the capacity of more able children to extend their own learning and to

demonstrate their understanding through their writing. As a result of this and children's limited language skills, although children achieve well in developing their knowledge of the world, standards overall are likely to be below those expected by the end of reception.

42. In providing for children's **physical development**, the teacher is hampered in providing constant access to an outside area for children to develop their physical skills by the restrictions of the building. However, teachers' planning shows that she makes the best use possible of the facilities, such as the school hall, to provide a satisfactory range of activities to develop their physical skills.
43. The use of a satisfactory range of activities teaches children to explore different media and to develop their imaginative skills. For example, in one very good **creative development** lesson the class went outside and found natural materials such as sticks, stones, leaves, moss and bark on the grass and used these to make small sculptures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. They were very enthusiastic and took great delight and care in arranging what they had collected. The teacher used the digital camera well to record what the children had made so that they could look at them later using the interactive whiteboard in the classroom.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is consistently good or better.
- Subject leadership and management are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to work are often exemplary.
- The school has developed a very systematic approach to develop pupils' basic skills.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills across in other subjects.

Commentary

44. Very good leadership and management have been crucial factors in the significant improvement seen in English since the previous inspection. The subject leader is highly skilled, provides very strong leadership and is an excellent role model for staff and pupils and her highly effective monitoring of teaching and the evaluation of standards have given rise to effective action. As a result, the school has rigorously tackled the issues identified in the previous report and the measures taken have resulted in improved standards and better achievement.
45. There has been a rising trend in standards over the past years. Currently, standards in reading and writing and speaking and listening skills at the end of Year 2 are well in line with the national expectation. Standards in reading and writing in Year 6 are average overall, but standards of pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. This heralds some significant achievement given pupils' well below expected communication skills when they start school. Writing has been a focus for improvement and the school's success is now seen in the significant proportion of pupils in Year 6 who are likely to reach the higher than nationally expected level.

46. Successful strategies include the introduction throughout the school of a very systematic approach to writing. This focuses on step-by-step planning for both narrative and non-narrative writing. Pupils use planning frames designed to meet their particular ages and abilities. Step-by-step building blocks provide pupils with vocabulary, basic writing skills and ideas in an organised form, so that final drafts of writing are fluent and well-written. As a result, pupils' writing at the end of Year 2 is well organised and has clear meaning. Basic punctuation and spelling are generally accurate and handwriting is clear and legible. Pupils build well on their early writing skills in Years 3 to 6 and demonstrate an increasingly extensive vocabulary and understanding of writing strategies. By the end of Year 6 writing is clearly structured in paragraphs. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory and pupils show a willingness to experiment with language and imagery in their attempts to make their writing more interesting. Examples of pupils' work seen during the inspection, such as poetry about rivers and moonlight, narratives about a secret cave, persuasive writing for and against housing developments and instructions and reports about their wild life trail, reflect the broad range and purpose of pupils' work in English lessons. However, teachers do not consistently provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across all subjects and this limits the overall challenge in writing.
47. Standards in reading have been improved by the introduction of a published phonics programme to boost early reading skills. As a result, combined with a total review of reading resources and library provision, there is more consistency in the teaching of reading and, consequently, pupils' achievement as they move through the school is good. They develop a growing enthusiasm for books and develop their independent reading skills. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 they read appropriate books with accuracy and understanding. Younger pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds well to help them read unfamiliar words. Older pupils acquire a good knowledge of books and authors and talk enthusiastically about their own preferences. Incisive leadership and management of English have underpinned the new working strategies and are a major contribution to the improved picture.
48. Speaking and listening skills have improved throughout the school because of the good opportunities pupils have through discussion, drama and role-play to develop their self-confidence and skills. As a result, by Year 6, pupils engage in conversation confidently. They are articulate and express their ideas clearly. They listen carefully to one another and answer questions thoughtfully. At all times pupils are courteous and polite.
49. The quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection, teaching observed was at least good with some outstanding teaching seen. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This is a good improvement on the satisfactory judgement given in the previous report.
50. Good learning is strongly promoted by pupils' personal qualities and their attitudes to work. Behaviour in lessons is often exemplary in the way pupils respond to their teachers, classroom assistants and each other. Pupils are keen to learn because teachers make lessons interesting for them. All lessons are well prepared. Teachers make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn and use good strategies to help them achieve their objectives. In a highly effective lesson, for example, the teacher used the computer to link music and visual images displayed on the whiteboard. Their effectiveness was enhanced by the introduction of candles in a Gothic style candelabrum and by the way the teacher used her voice to create the atmosphere surrounding a castle. The dramatic experience created helped pupils to select vocabulary to describe feelings, atmosphere and excitement and they used this very effectively in their writing, which was based on earlier readings of Hamlet. All teachers take account of different abilities and age in their classes and provide suitable work for them. Classroom assistants make a very significant contribution to learning when taking groups of pupils. They work effectively as members of the teaching team, know pupils well and are sensitive to their specific needs. Pupils from Travellers' families are supported well and their learning and achievement are good. They are very well integrated in school. When not attending, homework is provided and checked on their return. Pupils are happy in school and make good friends. The use of homework generally is good and provides an informative and effective link between home and school. There has been very good improvement in the

systems for assessing pupils' work and setting targets for achievement. Pupils are well informed of the progress they make through the very good quality of marking. They know their personal targets and older pupils keep their own progress records and work closely with their teachers to set themselves new targets.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. The use of literacy skills across the curriculum is improving, and is, overall, satisfactory. Some good examples are seen in religious education, science, design and technology, history and geography where the focus is primarily on factual recording. However, clear links between literacy skills and topics are not consistently planned into the full range of subjects, so writing opportunities for pupils to express their own ideas and opinions are missed. This is recognised by the school as an area for development.
52. **French** was sampled by looking at one lesson. This subject was introduced recently to the curriculum as part of the school's commitment to extending pupils' awareness of other cultures. Much of the work is oral and concentrates on equipping pupils with a basic vocabulary. In the one lesson seen, pupils were very enthusiastic and concentrated very well. As a result, they rapidly learnt the French words for essential classroom equipment such as pens, text books and rulers. The subject is making a good contribution to pupils' personal development and helping their preparation for transfer to secondary school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils do particularly well in number and also when they need to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils' attitudes are good, with pupils in Years 5 and 6 being particularly enthusiastic and hardworking.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and, as a result, pupils' achievement is also good.
- The curriculum has been effectively modified to suit pupils' different ages, capabilities and learning styles.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Numeracy skills are developed well in science and ICT.

Commentary

53. Pupils' attainment has gradually improved over the past few years, with recent performance in national tests being close to the national average. This improvement has continued into the current year and standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good overall, owing to the good teaching and a well-targeted curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and those from Traveller families also achieve well, owing to the good support provided for them. There is an appropriate emphasis on teaching number skills and pupils do well in these lessons. The school has recently placed an additional emphasis upon matching teaching skills to the pupils' different learning styles, which is helping pupils to do well in lessons where they are asked to solve mathematical problems.
54. Pupils enjoy their lessons and concentrate well, having good attitudes towards their lessons. This positive attitude is further developed in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are collaborative, well-focused and sensible in their approach, showing well developed and mature social skills.
55. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have a clear knowledge and understanding of the subject and their pupils' needs and plan lessons which are well matched

to the pupils' capabilities. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour, so lessons have a very positive working atmosphere. Teachers' planning is appropriately based upon the National Numeracy Strategy, which has been modified so that work is matched to the needs of all groups of pupils, whilst still working towards the same learning objectives. However, the school has also been working on analysing pupils' learning styles and using this information to ensure that activities in lessons engage pupils, whatever their preferred style. As a result, lessons are briskly-paced, interesting and challenging and pupils learn well. Good use is made of the high quality support staff to ensure that pupils from different year groups have appropriate work. This arrangement is a strength of the mathematics curriculum as it ensures that work is appropriately matched to pupils' needs and helps pupils to achieve well.

56. The subject is very well led by an effective and conscientious subject leader, who monitors teachers' planning, observes lessons and samples pupils' work and is a positive influence upon the improvement in standards across the school. She has also been responsible for the significant improvements in the assessment systems since the last inspection. As part of this process, she analyses test results and uses the information very well to advise colleagues of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge, so that they can adjust their planning appropriately. Pupils' progress is very carefully tracked and targets are set for each pupil. They have a clear understanding of what they need to learn and have an obvious perception of their targets and how to achieve them.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to use and practise their numeracy skills in other subjects. Although there are a few missed opportunities in, for example, geography, science and ICT are used well to support pupils' learning in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well; the achievement of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is very good.
- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' attitudes are good, with pupils in Years 5 and 6 being particularly enthusiastic and hardworking.
- Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good, and, as a result, pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum is good, with some good additional provision in Year 6.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

58. Pupils' attainment has gradually improved over the past few years, particularly at the end of Year 6, although their overall performance over the past three years has been below average. However, in 2004, pupils achieved very well compared to their low starting point. Current standards are broadly in line with those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2, and they achieve well. Pupils in Year 6 are currently well on course to attain standards that are well above average by the end of the year owing to the strong emphasis teachers place on developing their investigative skills, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where achievement is very good. Pupils with special educational needs and those from Traveller families also achieve well, owing to the good support provided for them.
59. The quality of teaching is good overall, with teaching in Years 5 and 6 being very good. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and concentrate well, having good attitudes towards their work. This positive attitude is further developed in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are

collaborative, well-focused and sensible in their approach, showing well developed and mature social skills. Teachers' planning is clear and includes activities matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. Good use is made of the high quality support staff to help pupils learn and develop skills at a good pace. Teachers make good use of all available resources, including the recently-introduced interactive whiteboards, to include a wide range of elements into their lessons. For example, in one Year 5 lesson, the teacher's excellent preparation ensured that her pupils had access to high quality photographs, informative slides, internet websites and video clips, which gave them a clear insight into how seeds are formed and carried across land, water and air. This high quality provision ensured that the pupils learned a great deal and achieved very well.

60. Termly visits to the local high school by Year 6 pupils provide them with the opportunity to experience a wider range of resources other than those currently available in their own school and work with a specialist science teacher. The attitudes of Year 6 pupils who visit the local high school for science lessons are exemplary. They are very well behaved and reflect the school's high standards of respect, maturity and sensibleness. This arrangement is an effective use of additional provision to enrich the school's basic curriculum.
61. The subject leader provides very good leadership and manages the subject very well. She has led the school team effectively, which has resulted in a significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection. In addition, assessment systems have improved greatly since the last inspection and are now used well to improve standards. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to learn and know their targets and how to achieve them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- There is strong leadership and management of ICT, so resources and facilities have improved well since the last inspection.
- There is scope for pupils to apply skills more widely across subjects.

Commentary

62. Standards have remained in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 since the previous inspection. The introduction of new resources and improved facilities has enabled the school to keep pace with developments in ICT. Resources, which include interactive whiteboards in all classrooms, are used effectively by teachers and pupils. Relatively few pupils have access to computers outside of school; nevertheless, they achieve well overall and in some aspects, most notably multi-media work, pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 6. However, in other aspects such as data handling, the range of opportunities for pupils to extend their basic skills is more limited.
63. The quality of teaching is good. Weaknesses identified previously, relating to the teaching of specific skills, have been eliminated. This is because teachers' subject knowledge and expertise have increased, enabling them to make full use of the ICT suite and newly installed whiteboards. Lessons are well planned and thoughtful use of national subject guidance ensures a step by step approach. Pupils' very good attitudes to work underpin their learning. They are enthusiastic and eager to try out new skills. In one lesson, for example, Year 5 pupils learned how to animate PowerPoint slides and add sound effects in a very short time because of their very high level of interest and motivation. Teachers establish very good relationships and maintain high expectations; consequently, pupils' behaviour is often

exemplary. Occasionally, the pace of teaching and learning slows when long explanations are not supported by a visual stimulus to hold pupils' full attention.

64. Improved resources have a strong impact on pupils' achievement. These are managed effectively overall to teach and consolidate necessary skills. A daily lunchtime computer club provides extra opportunities for pupils in all classes. Subject leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection. Learning outcomes are more rigorously monitored and effective assessment systems have been put in place. The subject leader has a very clear overview of standards and knows where improvements are needed. For example, currently pupils do not have many opportunities to apply their skills independently in all subjects to enhance learning. Where subjects are linked through ICT, such as in art work or through the use of a digital camera, the outcomes and purpose of learning are clear. Good examples are the work of pupils in Years 3 and 4 where they used digital images to help create stories which oppose bullying, and the use of digital photography in PE lessons, which provided pupils with a visual perspective of 'the perfect balance', but such examples are limited.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The main focus in ICT, since the acquisition of new resources, has been to build up pupils' basic skills. There are some examples of pupils' word processed work in junior classes, some links with art and increasing use of digital cameras. There is still much scope for pupils to apply the full range of their skills across a wider range of subjects to support learning.

HUMANITIES

66. Owing to the timetable arrangements and the focus of the inspection, provision in **history** and **geography** was sampled by looking at pupils' work, talking to subject leaders and observing a small number of lessons. Pupils' work and school documentation show that pupils study a balanced range of topics that provide them with opportunities to develop the full range of skills, knowledge and understanding. The school makes good use of the village and visits further afield to places such as Durham and Beamish Museum to give pupils practical experiences. However, much of the work in pupils' books is very similar and, although pupils of different ability produce work that reflects their differing abilities, there is limited evidence of teachers planning tasks to enable pupils to plan their own work or to use their own initiative to explore aspects of topics that capture their imagination. As a result, although there are some good examples such as 'PowerPoint' presentations on mountains by Year 5 pupils, the range of opportunities across the school for pupils to use the full range of their literacy and ICT skills to express their ideas and imagination and to handle data through graphs and charts is limited.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- There are insufficient opportunities for older pupils to record what they have learned.

Commentary

67. Standards are satisfactory across the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, as a result of good quality teaching. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and results in satisfactory achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and those from Traveller families achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and have satisfactory achievement in Years 3 to 6.
68. Pupils enjoy their lessons, listen carefully and participate well when given the opportunity to engage in role play. They write and draw carefully when recording what they have learned, and their discussions demonstrate sensitivity towards other people's customs and beliefs. As they move through the school, owing to the good range of visits to places of worship and visiting speakers, pupils develop a good knowledge of different faiths. This prepares them well for living in a culturally diverse society and they develop a very good respect for the traditions and beliefs of other people. However, there is less emphasis on pupils considering what effect this may have on their own lives and higher up the school there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to record what they have learned. As a result, opportunities are missed to build upon the good quality oral work in lessons, to deepen pupils' understanding and to encourage them to express their views, opinions and emotions through their writing.
69. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and conscientious subject leader and, under her leadership, provision in the subject has improved well in many aspects since the last inspection. For example, secure assessment systems are in place to measure how well pupils are learning in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when there were no assessment systems in place and this was highlighted as a key issue for development. In addition, the curriculum is now planned more appropriately, and assessment and good quality resources are available to support teaching and learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. **Art and design** and **design and technology** were sampled. No judgement on overall provision is possible because no teaching was observed in either subject. On the basis of discussions held with staff and pupils' work displayed, there is currently a stronger focus on art than in the recent past because of impetus provided by the recently appointed subject leader. Pupils are given an increasing range of opportunities to explore colour and texture in two and three dimensional work as they move through the school. Pupils' experiences are broadened by working with visiting artists, for example to create Chinese paper sculptures. A weekly art and craft club provides pupils with the chance to foster their skills outside of lesson time. There are some productive links with other subjects. An array of clay work decorated with ancient Greek designs makes an impressive display and there is some work in Van Gogh's style generated by computer. National subject guidance is used as a basis for planning the curriculum in both subjects. This ensures that pupils also gain an adequate range of experiences in design and technology. In Years 1 and 2, designs and the subsequent models of buildings show that pupils begin to build up skills satisfactorily.
71. **Music** was sampled, with two lessons being observed, pupils' written work analysed, where available, and discussions held with a group of pupils. There was insufficient evidence upon which to base judgements on standards, achievement, teaching or learning. School planning documents show that curriculum provision is satisfactory throughout the school, and is supported by a good range of resources and a satisfactory assessment system. The curriculum is enriched by a weekly singing club, visits and visitors to school. Groups of pupils also participate in performances both in school and within the wider community. Satisfactory use is made of additional specialist teachers to provide instrumental lessons for a small number of pupils in Years 3 to 6.
72. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided in **physical education** and, although overall judgements cannot be made about pupils' achievement, they made very good progress in developing their skills in the two lessons seen. The school has set up good links with other

schools and outside agencies which are helping to raise achievement. For example, in a gymnastics lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefited from the extra support and expertise provided by the specialist teacher and the three students from Gilesgate College. The ratio of adults to pupils meant that there was a high level of individual coaching; consequently, pupils' performance was enhanced. Pupils performed equally well in a dance session because of the very high quality of teaching by the visiting specialist. A good range of field sports adds further enrichment to the PE curriculum and provides pupils with the chance to nurture skills which they apply enthusiastically in competitive games. In a short time, the subject leader, who is a specialist in outdoor education, has begun to make a good contribution to the development of the subject. He has a clear plan to enhance the provision further, such as by developing an orienteering course in the school grounds, and he was instrumental in a recent successful bid for funding to improve gymnastics equipment that has enabled the setting up of a gymnastics club, which is well attended by pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

73. This area of the curriculum was sampled. From the one lesson seen and discussion with the co-ordinator, **personal, social and health education** makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced a whole-school scheme of work that places a strong emphasis on issues of sex, drugs and alcohol. Close partnerships have been developed with local health professionals who contribute to lessons and members of staff have been trained in drugs education. The school is involved in several initiatives to promote healthy living such as the National School Milk scheme and the National Fruit for Schools scheme. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools award, which reflects its commitment to developing and promoting this aspect of its provision. A reward-based assessment and target setting system has recently been set up by the co-ordinator to involve pupils in monitoring and evaluating their own personal development and setting themselves targets to work on. Pupils collect tokens to reward, for example, acts of kindness to others. Certificates for collecting a certain number are awarded in assembly. Pupils throughout the school understand and value these awards and the system is beginning to be an important feature of the school's ethos.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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

