

INSPECTION REPORT

WHEATLEY HILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114147

Headteacher: Mr A Bromley

Lead inspector: Mr G Brown

Dates of inspection: 27 – 29 June 2005

Inspection number: 268242

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	232
School address:	Wheatley Hill County Durham
Postcode:	DH6 3RQ
Telephone number:	01429 820594
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Watson
Date of previous inspection:	24 May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wheatley Hill is an average size primary school set in a semi-rural location approximately eight miles from the City of Durham. Pupils are drawn mainly from the village of Wheatley Hill, although a few come from more distant areas. The school serves an ex-mining community where there are currently above average levels of unemployment, pockets of high social disadvantage and increasing family mobility. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. A significant number of children enter the nursery with well below average standards, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their personal development. The 232 pupils on roll include children who attend the nursery part-time and 13 who are registered in a Language Resource Base (LRB) for pupils with speech and language difficulties. For part of each day, all these pupils are well integrated into mainstream classes. Currently, there are significantly more boys than girls in the school and the ethnic mix is very low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average. A significant number of these pupils have either moderate learning difficulties, emotional problems or specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The total number of pupils with statements is 13 and this also is very high, owing, in part, to those stated in the Language Resource Base.

The school has a high commitment to inclusion and its prime aim is to develop the school as a caring environment in which each individual will feel valued, respected and achieve their potential. Since 2001, the school has achieved the Activemark, the Artsmark, the Basic Skills Award and the Healthy Schools Award. Frequent changes of staff have occurred since the previous inspection, much of it at management level, and the school has experienced an overall lack of stability. The current headteacher took up post a little less than two years ago. Three of the school's regular teachers were absent during the inspection period.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21060	George Brown	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Design and technology Music Religious education Personal, social and health education
12682	Jim Griffin	Lay inspector	
18709	Nina Bee	Team inspector	Special educational needs Art and design
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Geography History
20063	Gerard Slamon	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school, which provides an effective quality of education for all its pupils. Under the very good leadership of the headteacher the school continues to meet its aims very well. Although standards are below average in key subjects, the good teaching and learning enables pupils to achieve well. The school is well managed and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and helps to create an inclusive and welcoming school.
- Teaching and learning are good and enable the pupils to achieve well and to make good progress.
- Standards in English, mathematics, religious education and information and communication technology (ICT) are below average by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) make a particularly good start to their schooling.
- There is strong provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those in the Language Resource Base (LRB).
- The attendance of some pupils is poor and this affects their overall progress and everyday work.
- The school makes effective provision for the pupils' personal development and this leads to positive attitudes, harmonious relationships and good behaviour.
- School governors do not monitor the performance of the school closely enough and need greater input into how it will develop in the future.
- The good curriculum is enriched by a wide range of clubs and activities which the pupils clearly enjoy.

The school has made satisfactory progress since its previous inspection although it has faced many staffing and other changes in that time. It has made relatively rapid strides in the past two years. The main weaknesses outlined in 1999 have largely been eliminated: including more accurate targeting of the most able pupils, better use of the library and improvements in the pupils' annual reports. Although standards have fallen in some areas, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and the LRB is enjoying perhaps its most successful period. The school has also become more self-evaluative and is currently pursuing its priorities very well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils achieve well across the school when set against their standards on entry, which are well below average. Children in the Foundation Stage make a very good start to their schooling because of the very good provision. Despite this, significant numbers are unlikely to reach the standards expected for their age, particularly in their personal development and in communication, language and literacy. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also achieve well and the standards reached by seven-year-olds are now much improved, although still below average in English and mathematics. Most pupils continue to progress and achieve well in the junior years and the school has provided much 'added value' between Years 3 and 6. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics, ICT and religious education mainly because they are, overall, a lower attaining group than the 2004 cohort shown in the table below. They have also been affected by past staffing changes and relatively high pupil mobility. Despite this, comparisons with similar schools remain quite favourable.

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

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.

Younger pupils experience difficulties in their reading and the school is rightly placing more emphasis on the need for good standards in speaking and listening as well as improving pupils' writing styles by the end of Year 6. Standards in science are broadly average and most pupils reach the expected standard for their age in music and physical education. Standards in ICT are as expected by the end of Year 2, but are below average by the end of Year 6. Older pupils need additional practice in the use of computers to explore and extend learning in other subjects. Pupils with SEN, the very few learning English as an additional language and those in the LRB, all achieve well when set against their individual targets. The school's targets for future attainment are realistic, given the accurate data being compiled on the likely performance of each pupil across the school.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. They form positive relationships with adults and with other pupils and behave well. Attendance is below the national average but lateness is only a problem for a minority.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good quality of education** for all its pupils. **The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall,** and there are many examples of very effective teaching when pupils achieve particularly well. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are consistently very good, ensuring that children settle rapidly into school routines and achieve well. The leadership and management of this age group, as well as others, are helping pupils to reach their potential. Lessons are well planned across the school and are generally effective in meeting the needs of different attaining pupils, including the most and least able. Pupils in the LRB are taught very successfully, as are those with SEN and the few for whom English is an additional language. Teachers use the available time well and make lessons informative and enjoyable. Support staff bring a wide range of talent and enthusiasm to pupils' learning. There is also sufficient challenge to extend learning and a good range of strategies are deployed to motivate the pupils. Good use is made of teachers' assessments, although marking is not always consistent or helpful to the pupils. Teaching and learning are good in several subjects, including English, mathematics, science, music and physical education. The curriculum is broad and well organised and there are many opportunities to take part in activities outside the National Curriculum. The school has good and successful links with parents and increasingly effective links with the wider community. Good emphasis is placed on the pupils' care and welfare and they feel secure in school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and, with others, provides clear educational direction and focus for school development. There is a strong commitment to inclusion and meeting the needs of individual pupils. There is also a growing sense of teamwork, which is helping staff to understand the importance of their roles and responsibilities. Good strategic planning is now the norm and there is a clear match between current priorities and school expenditure. Governance is satisfactory but has a limited impact on evaluating school performance or helping to shape its future direction.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils share a positive view of the school and are quick to praise the staff for their skill and support. Parents are pleased with the curriculum and the manner in which pupils are encouraged to do their best. Some would like more information about how they can help their child at home. Most children clearly enjoy school and find learning fun and challenging. Some would like more to do over lunch-times.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Explore ways to improve pupils' standards in English, mathematics and religious education.
- Raise standards in ICT, ensuring that all pupils make more use of computers in their general learning.
- Extend the means by which governors can help shape the direction taken by the school and increase their knowledge of how best to measure and evaluate its overall performance.

- Give added weight to the need for good attendance, including the means by which it can be improved, monitored and reported on.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children enter the nursery with well below average attainment. They achieve well because of the quality of teaching and learning and through the careful monitoring of their everyday progress. Despite this, significant numbers are unlikely to attain the expected standards for their age by the time they transfer to Year 1. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also achieve well across a wide range of subjects but standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below the national average. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well in most subjects but, currently, standards are below average in English, mathematics, ICT and religious education. There are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve particularly well set against their low standards on entry.
- Standards in English and mathematics are generally below average across the school.
- Pupils achieve well for their ability because of the overall quality of the school's provision.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those in the Language Resource Base are well supported and managed and this helps them to make consistently good progress.
- Standards in ICT and religious education are below expectations by the end of Year 6.

Commentary

1. The very good provision in the Foundation Stage means that children achieve well in all areas of learning. However, their low standards on entry mean that many are unlikely to reach the expected standards for their age by the end of the reception year. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well following much improved teaching and school management. However, their standards are still below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Few pupils reach the higher levels for their age. The Year 2 results in 2004 (see table below) were affected by several staffing changes as well as being, in general, a lower-attaining group of pupils. The indicative results from 2005, supported by inspection observations, show that Year 2 standards are rising again. This is due to improvements in teaching and learning and the careful tracking of pupils' everyday work. The priorities expressed within leadership and management have also played their part in these latest improvements. Standards in ICT and science are at the level expected for the age of the pupils by the end of Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.2 (13.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	11.5 (12.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	12.8 (16.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Standards in Year 6 are currently lower than those reflected in the figures given below for 2004. The current Year 6 has been affected considerably by pupil mobility and has experienced several staff changes, including periods when the school had no permanent management team.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.2 (23.3)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.0 (23.7)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.3 (25.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Standards in reading and science are currently broadly average, but are below average in mathematics and writing. In mathematics, pupils have difficulty with aspects of division and multiplication and are not confident with problem-solving or in their use of mathematical language. Their writing sometimes lacks variety, depth and accuracy. Too few pupils in these subjects are likely to attain the higher standards for their age. Despite this, most pupils achieve well and do their best. Standards in science are average and pupils usually achieve well in this subject year on year. Standards in ICT are below average, although things are improving as more pupils gain full access to the new computer suite. Many pupils do not use ICT well enough to help broaden their knowledge in other areas of the curriculum. By the end of Year 6, pupils also lack knowledge and understanding of their work in religious education, but are broadly at the levels expected for their age in music and physical education. There has been renewed school emphasis on raising standards through careful subject management involving assessment and target-setting. The targets set for future attainment in Year 6 are both challenging and realistic.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in most of their lessons and in relation to the targets on their individual education plans. However, sometimes teachers' planning does not cater for their individual needs and activities are too difficult for them. When this happens, they do not achieve as well as they should. A few pupils from mainstream classes join those already in the Language Resource Base for their literacy and numeracy lessons. These pupils consistently achieve very well in this setting because all activities are planned carefully to address their individual needs. The pupils with speech and language difficulties who work in the Language Resource Base achieve very well because the two teachers and the specialist support assistants work hard at developing programmes which are tailored to suit their specific needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils show good attitudes towards school and to their work in lessons. Their behaviour is good and is underpinned by good relationships among fellow pupils and with adults. Pupils' personal qualities are well developed. Pupils' punctuality is satisfactory, but attendance remains unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are successful strategies to ensure that pupils behave well and relate positively to one another.
- Pupils' personal qualities are well developed; their moral and social development is good.
- A small minority of parents fails to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Commentary

- Most pupils like their school. They appreciate the support and encouragement provided by teachers. Older pupils express favourable views about the wide range of improvements in recent years. They talk positively about the improvements in pupil behaviour, computer facilities, general decor and the range of after-school clubs. They enjoy most of their lessons, although a sizeable sample of Year 6 pupils say they find mathematics hard and sometimes confusing. In lessons, pupils' attitudes towards their work are consistently good. Most pupils

listen well and show good levels of interest, concentration and determination to complete set tasks. Pupils respond particularly well where teacher expectations are high, lesson tasks are demanding and they are able to engage in a variety of practical activities. Their enthusiasm for practical activities is clearly evident in art and design, physical education and ICT lessons.

- Staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and most learners are keen not to let down their teachers or themselves. The good and reliable behaviour of most pupils is a key element in the positive atmosphere for social development that prevails. Rare incidents of racism are taken very seriously, fully investigated and properly reported. There is some bullying, mainly verbal teasing among a small minority of pupils. Pupils know that persistent incidents, once reported, are thoroughly and fairly investigated. The school therefore places a strong emphasis on prevention of all forms of anti-social behaviour, primarily through frequent recognition of good behaviour and attitudes. Rare incidents of violent aggressive behaviour, such as fighting, are now regarded as unacceptable. The number of exclusions is in decline.

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	181	3	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

- Harmonious relationships among pupils, irrespective of background or gender, are a positive feature of school life. Teachers value pupils' work and regularly praise and reward effort and good work. As a result, from an early age, pupils feel comfortable, for example, when asking questions of adults. This significantly assists their learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs generally respond positively in lessons and behave very well. The pupils with speech and language difficulties and those that join them from the main school, develop very good relationships with the adults who work with them in the Language Resource Base. All pupils show positive attitudes to learning when they work on the interesting and stimulating activities which are planned for them. Behaviour is always at least good and frequently better, whether the pupils work in the Language Resource Base or when they are integrated into classes.
- Although few children exceed expectations, several are on course to achieve the early learning goals related to their personal, social and emotional development, by the end of the reception year. Most pupils in all classes are calm, happy and consistently well-mannered. As a result, teachers are able to rely increasingly on pupils to work sensibly in pairs and small groups, particularly as pupils get older. The school's personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) lessons, including the use of 'circle time', when pupils share their feelings and concerns, is an important contributor to pupils' good social development. When given the opportunity, older pupils exercise responsibility for themselves and others in a sensible way. The school recognises that there is room for improvement in the range of responsibilities provided, particularly for older pupils. Most pupils listen calmly and with respect to different views expressed by others. Most pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and of what is fair. They hold the rewards system in high regard and fully support the school's sanctions, where needed.

10. Pupils' good opportunities for reflection in assemblies and in the closing part of some lessons make an important contribution to their satisfactory spiritual development. Pupils' cultural development, including their understanding of their own culture, is satisfactory. Older pupils say that they learn about respect for differences of all kinds as part of PHSCE. This is an important part of pupils' preparation for life in a multicultural world. Religious education, history and geography lessons also make worthwhile contributions to pupils' satisfactory multi-cultural development.

Attendance

The table below provides attendance and absence data for the latest complete reporting year, when the attendance followed a rather familiar pattern of being below the national median.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94.3%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

11. To date, in the current year, attendance is similar to that of previous years. The school's measures to monitor absence and promote high attendance are satisfactory but could be improved. The importance of good attendance is regularly stressed to parents and full annual attendance is recognised. However, there is a small minority of parents who do not deliver on their key responsibility of ensuring that their children attend school regularly. The school, with help from the local education department, now has clear plans to focus more closely on the needs of these families. Punctuality is satisfactory and almost all pupils arrive on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for all its pupils. Teaching and learning, the curriculum, and guidance and support are all good. The links with parents and with the community are also good. The school's links with other schools are used effectively.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good across the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the Learning Resource Base and throughout the Foundation Stage.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better in Year 6.
- The great majority of teaching is good in all age groups and within a wide range of subjects.
- In the more ordinary lessons in Years 1 to 5, the pitch or pace of work leads to pupils making less progress than expected or hoped for.
- Teachers do not make enough use of pupils' ICT skills to support learning in other subjects.
- In religious education and topic work, some teachers do not have high expectations of pupils' researching topics for themselves or of the quality of their written work.

Commentary

12. Pupils generally make good progress throughout their time in the school and achieve well. This is because of the overall good quality of teaching, provision of a good curriculum and pupils' good attitudes to learning. The table below gives an outline of the quality of lessons

seen during the inspection, which represents a significant improvement over the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Following his appointment two years ago, the headteacher has been effective in building a strong team of staff who demonstrate a mainly consistent approach to the management of teaching based on very good subject knowledge and a good understanding of pupils' different learning needs.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	15 (29%)	27 (52%)	10 (19%)	0	0	0

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

13. Improvements have largely come about as a result of regular and rigorous monitoring by the headteacher, supported by local authority personnel. Parents strongly agree that teaching is good and most pupils agree that teachers make their lessons interesting and fun. Teachers' planning is good. In English and mathematics, teachers are able to plan more effectively because assessment procedures have been much improved. They are now more aware of the next stages needed in their pupils' learning. Information is also used well to track pupils' progress over time so that extra help can be provided if pupils are seen to be underachieving. Teachers have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn and share information with them at the start of the lessons. The deputy headteacher carefully analysis test results and other data, to help identify any weaknesses in provision or in pupils' learning. She has provided teachers with training so that they now have a greater understanding of the National Curriculum levels at which pupils are working. This is having a significant impact on teaching and learning.
14. Portfolios of pupils' assessed work are maintained for teachers to refer to. There are good examples in English, for example, of teachers' indicating through their marking how pupils might improve their work. However, teachers do not expect pupils to redraft their written work, taking account of written comments, so that they produce the best work of which they are capable. The good quality of marking seen in English books has not yet been extended to other subjects. Teachers and teaching assistants have also developed their skills in ICT, including the use of interactive whiteboards in lessons, and this, together with improved resources, has extended and improved the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. However, the contribution ICT can make to pupils' learning in other subjects has not been fully realised.
15. In the most effective lessons, after a stimulating introduction, teachers continue to teach and challenge at appropriate levels as pupils work on group or individual tasks. The teaching of science in Years 1 and 2, for example, is very good, because teachers place a lot of emphasis on pupils finding things out for themselves and give them enough time to do so. Teaching in Year 6 is similarly very good because pupils are often challenged to think for themselves and to become independent learners. In lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, the pace of learning slows as teachers spend too much time teaching and questioning the whole class. In these lessons some pupils lose concentration and there is too little time for independent research or writing. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is good. This has a significant influence on how staff manage successfully the pupils in their care. Teachers and their assistants are encouraging and supportive, which helps pupils become more confident in what they can achieve. The staff's high expectations of pupils' behaviour means that little time is lost because of the need to modify behaviour before positive learning occurs. Homework is used well to extend learning.
16. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Language Resource Base who work in mainstream classes in the afternoons, generally learn well. However, despite additional support, they sometimes do not achieve as well as they might because activities have not been simplified enough, or they are given insufficient guidance when completing written tasks. The teaching in the Language Resource Base is very good. All adults, including

the special support assistants, have high expectations regarding listening and they all value what each pupil says. As a result, all pupils listen well and are confident to speak during group discussions. Teachers consistently plan lessons that are well-matched to the pupils' individual needs.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is good and is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The accommodation, staffing and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage have a rich curriculum that matches their changing needs.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those in the Language Resource Base is good, overall.
- Pupils' learning is supported by a wide range of visits, visitors and opportunities to partake in a variety of enjoyable activities.
- The accommodation and resources are good and used well by staff and pupils.

Commentary

17. The school provides a curriculum that meets statutory requirements effectively. Religious education is taught in accordance with the local agreed syllabus and an act of collective worship is held daily. The curriculum provides well for those pupils who have special educational needs, particularly those who are based in the Language Resource Base. These pupils join mainstream classes in the afternoon and this ensures that they receive the full curriculum. Pupils' personal, health and social education is taught discreetly through the other areas of the curriculum, while sex and relationships, drug and alcohol misuse are well covered with some input from outside agencies. The importance of all aspects of health in the school has resulted in the award of the Healthy School Award. This is an inclusive school, where every effort is made to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum, both during and outside the school day. It prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education, both from reception to Year 1 and from Year 6 to secondary education.
18. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a stimulating curriculum and enjoy the wide range of experiences that are offered, both in and out of school. The main focus is on developing their language, and personal, social and emotional skills, without which children find it difficult to access other areas of learning. Curriculum planning and assessment are very good, which ensures that the needs of the individual child are well met.
19. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and has been maintained at this level since the previous inspection. Most pupils have clear targets on their individual education plans and the teaching assistants work hard when reinforcing these targets during small group teaching sessions. Teachers' plans are reviewed termly and parents are regularly updated as to their child's progress.
20. The provision for the pupils in the Language Resource Base is very good. Each pupil receives a carefully prepared curriculum, tailored to suit their specific needs. Good documentation is kept on all pupils which identifies the pupils' targets and how near they are to achieving them. All pupils work in the LRB to develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills. For all other subjects, they are well integrated into mainstream classes. Provision for pupils during these lessons is variable. In good lessons, where teaching is effective, they are generally well provided for. At other times, activities are not always accurately matched to their needs and progress is less rapid.

21. Enrichment to the curriculum, through visits, visitors and activities outside the taught day, is very good. The award of Active Mark and Quality Mark indicates this. Sports and music activities are varied and there are others, including residential visits, which clearly extend pupils' experiences. The school also has many connections with aspects of local life that enhance the pupils' sense of community. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about these aspects of their curriculum, and those on offer outside the taught day have to be carefully timetabled to ensure that pupils join those which they wish to attend. They talk enthusiastically about many visits, such as that to the Lake District.
22. There are a good number of teachers and support staff to match the needs of all pupils and the curriculum. Teachers are experienced and the support staff are very well trained to complement the work of the teachers. The senior staff work well as a team, and this also applies to those who work in the Foundation Stage. The emphasis that has been placed on literacy and numeracy means few co-ordinators have had the opportunity to share skills and monitor work across the school.
23. The school is spacious and has extensive grounds. Ample room is provided for each class and there are other small rooms that are put to good use. There are lively displays of pupils' work in the wide corridors and the whole school is clean and inviting. The library is sited at the end of the hall and, whilst it is inviting, with places for pupils to browse, its situation makes quiet reading difficult while the hall is in use. It is also planned to move the reception class next to the nursery, which will provide an integrated Foundation Stage unit. A recent fire destroyed many resources in the nursery, which have yet to be built up, including the multi-cultural resources which were highlighted in the last report. Resources are good and allow the National Curriculum to be fully explored.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares well for its pupils. Pupils get good support, advice and guidance. There are good opportunities to involve pupils in school development through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils rightly say they feel safe and secure at school.
- Pupils have academic targets that are regularly reviewed, although these are less evident in some subjects.
- School regards the views of pupils as important to its work.

Commentary

24. Incidents of minor accidents, mainly in the playground, are low. First aid and health and safety arrangements are clear and effective. Secure measures are in place for child protection and looked after children, with arrangements well understood by staff. Parents are rightly positive about the good care provided for their children. The pupils themselves confirm that they feel safe and secure throughout the school day.
25. There are good induction arrangements to support the significant number of pupils who are admitted during term-time. Induction arrangements into reception are very good. Staff know pupils well and, where there are concerns, teachers and other staff work closely with pupils, parents and outside agencies to identify how these can be overcome. The support of pupils' achievement, through monitoring and recording, is relatively frequent and shared effectively with pupils and their parents. Good attitudes, good work and pupils' achievements outside of school, are all recognised very effectively at weekly celebration assemblies.
26. Older pupils say that teachers expect them to behave in a more grown up way as they move through school, and this works well. Pupils have simple targets, relating primarily to their academic progress. Staff discuss the outcomes of tests and targets with their pupils and this

important work is underpinned by very effective assessment and the tracking of pupils' achievements, in English in particular. Some marking provides helpful suggestions on how the pupils' work can be improved. However, this good practice is not yet consistent; nor is the involvement of older pupils in setting their own academic and personal targets.

27. The adults who work in the Language Resource Base are very aware of the needs of the pupils in their care. They liaise well with all other adults who support the pupils during their school day. In addition, class teachers are given information regarding the low levels at which pupils are often working. Pupils are well-integrated into the caring ethos of the wider school. Outside specialists are used well to support the pupils; for example, the speech therapist visits a number of times each week to work with all pupils.
28. The good relationships between pupils and their teachers create a positive atmosphere in which to hear pupils' views. 'Circle time', where pupils share their views, feelings and concerns with staff, is a well-established feature across the school. The new school council, comprising two elected pupils from Years 1 to 6, is having a positive impact. The Year 6 pupils provide leadership and all the members give regular feedback to their classes. The council leads a significant amount of fund-raising, organises discos and contributes positively to the thinking on playground improvements. The work of the council is also well regarded by other pupils. The great majority agree with the survey statement that adults willingly listen to their ideas.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are good. Links with other schools and colleges are also good and make an effective contribution to the development of staff and pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of good quality information is given to parents.
- The school regularly seeks and responds to the collective views of its parents.
- A significant number of parents show degrees of apathy towards their children's learning, and this remains an important barrier to raising achievement.
- There are important links with the church and public services.
- Pupils' learning is strengthened by effective links with the education department of the local authority and the local cluster of schools.

Commentary

29. The school works hard to maintain effective links with parents. It is therefore open and welcoming to parents; for example, sizeable numbers regularly attend and enjoy assemblies. Staff are also very accessible at the start and the end of the day. During parents' evenings, staff provide good opportunities to discuss pupils' progress and the annual reports are now of satisfactory quality. However, there is no clear indication as to how pupils are performing compared with national standards. Information on planned work is provided promptly to parents at the start of every half-term and the school now seeks parents' views in regular surveys. Where feasible, the survey outcomes inform the school development plan. Individual parental concerns are reported to be dealt with promptly, thoroughly and fairly. As a result, there are no formal complaints to the governing body. Parents are positive about what the school provides. However, the apathy towards school and their pupils' learning among a minority of parents remains an important barrier to raising achievement. The school has begun work to address this important issue through activities such as family learning.
30. The breakfast club supports a significant number of local families. There is some use of the large field by local sports' groups. Pupils' learning benefits from regular church links. For example, pupils attend services in the local church, for harvest and Christmas, when the choir sing. The police, fire service and the school nurse make valuable contributions to personal safety, drugs awareness and healthy living. Pupils take part in a range of collections and sponsored events for charity. Staff from a number of local businesses, help pupils to provide

- insight into the world of adult work. Pupils dance and the choir performs at the local club and at a senior citizens' home.
31. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed regularly of how well they are doing and the code of practice is followed well. Home/school books provide daily links between the school and the parents of the pupils in the LRB. These are particularly useful because the pupils come to school by taxi. Parents are well informed of the progress their children make.
 32. The school benefits significantly from its involvement with support and specialised staff from the local authority. The school also works closely with the new local Sure Start in relation to education and childcare provision. There have been important links with a local nursery in order to disseminate good practice. Collaboration is also strong with the local cluster of other primary schools, with headteachers and other staff meeting regularly to work on common issues.
 33. Pastoral arrangements are effective, particularly around the transfer of Year 6 pupils to the local secondary school. Year 6 pupils also take transition units in English and mathematics. Pupils' learning is clearly beginning to benefit from the expertise of secondary school staff, for example, in French. The school provides work experience placements for secondary school pupils and takes students on childcare courses from two local colleges. Older pupils take part in athletics and 'Tag' rugby competitions against other local schools, contributing to their knowledge of the local community whilst developing their sense of fair play and competition.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. The leadership and management provided by other key staff are good. Leadership and management are good, overall. School governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher focuses effectively on standards and knows how to lead sustainable change based on strong teamwork.
- The senior leadership team has a shared sense of vision and direction.
- The monitoring of whole-school improvements is very good and is underpinned by the performance management of all teaching staff.
- The governors are not, as yet, key partners in shaping the direction of the school and do little to hold the school to account through effective monitoring.
- Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are excellent and are very good in the Learning Resource Base. They are also good in several subjects.

Commentary

34. The headteacher provides very good and effective leadership and has a very clear grasp of the aids and barriers to raising pupils' achievement. When appointed, he identified the raising of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics as the key priority for the school. Considerable improvement has already occurred, with pupils now achieving well across the school. He rightly recognised that creating a culture of collective responsibility and effective team management were critical to improving teaching and raising pupils' standards in a rapid and sustainable way.
35. The headteacher has taken important steps to build a cohesive team. Whilst effectively supporting them, he has very effectively raised the level of expectation and challenge for all staff. They value the clear and shared sense of direction provided by the new leadership team, following a significant period of instability in the school's leadership. New appointments have helped increase the level of new ideas and commitment to improvement. The headteacher has sought and applied ideas and advice very effectively from outside sources. He rightly

recognises that further work is needed to raise the expectations of a significant minority of parents and some pupils.

36. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a sound grasp of the school's work and most of its strengths and areas for improvement. All statutory requirements are met. Governors ensure that a good curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils is in place. Governors are also committed and supportive of the school. Their capacity to question and provide appropriate challenge is underway, but is an important area for further development. The governors need to be less dependent on the headteacher and start to hold the school to account in an effective manner. They have a relatively minor role in setting the agenda for meetings and in shaping the longer-term direction of the school.
37. The leadership provided by key staff is good, overall. Other staff confirm that they are well supported, feel able to contribute and that morale is good. The leadership team has a shared sense of direction and each member makes an important contribution to the overall effectiveness of the school. The deputy headteacher's work on the tracking and prediction of pupils' performance is pivotal to monitoring the performance of pupils and staff. Subject leadership is exceptionally good in the Foundation Stage and good in English, mathematics, music and special educational needs. The leadership in the Learning Resource Base is very good. In other subjects, co-ordination is satisfactory, overall. However, a number of these co-ordinators have only recently been appointed and their role as co-ordinators needs direction and added emphasis on raising standards.
38. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The Language Resource Base is very well led and managed, not least in the way that integration has improved considerably in recent times. Throughout the entire school there is a very positive attitude to the integration of these pupils. Systems to support pupils with special educational needs are clear and the liaison between all adults is very good, particularly when working towards the targets on pupils' individual education plans. The co-ordinator is also aware of the need to monitor how well pupils with special educational needs achieve when they work in subjects other than literacy and numeracy.
39. Management is good, overall. The impact of performance management is very good. Performance management objectives are very well linked to key whole-school improvements and individuals' professional development. A number of teaching staff speak positively about the improvements in their teaching skills arising from the sizeable level of monitoring by external consultants and the senior management team. Scrutiny of performance data is very effective, especially in English and mathematics. Management is excellent in the Foundation Stage, whilst subject management is good in some core subjects but less effective elsewhere.

Financial information

Financial management is satisfactory. The headteacher exercises appropriate strategic oversight, and is well supported by the local authority's finance officer. The school makes good use of best value principles. Particularly strong features include the level of challenge set for all staff, and the way the views of stakeholders and outside expertise are used by the leadership team to bring about improvement. The table below summarises the financial data for the previous school year. The school, supported by the local authority, chose to maintain a high balance, as the current year's budget includes additional teaching and support staff employed to help raise standards. The school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	681,399	Balance from previous year	53,580
Total expenditure	673,676	Balance carried forward to the next	61,303

Expenditure per pupil	2,819
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) is very good and a strength of the school. Children can enter the nursery after their third birthday and the majority transfer to the reception class the following year. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very successful in promoting the early learning goals in all areas of children's development. The nursery is accommodated in a large and newly equipped unit, which contributes to the very good provision for these children. The recent fire destroyed many resources and these have yet to be replaced, including multicultural resources which were judged deficient at the time of the last report. It is planned to move the reception class adjacent to the nursery and to provide shared facilities and a new outdoor area. This will then create a single and comprehensive unit for the under-fives.

Planning for the Foundation Stage is frequently excellent, which means that children have a very firm learning base ready for their transfer to Year 1. All staff have a strong commitment to raising standards. The record-keeping and assessment systems are clear and informative, and provide the basis for planning the curriculum to meet the needs of the individual child. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are excellent and there is very strong teamwork among the teachers and support staff. The co-ordinator is experienced and very well qualified, and has a clear vision of the development of the Foundation Stage. Teaching is very good, with every minute used to reinforce learning. All learning is made into a fun activity, so that children are eager to join in. Parents are welcomed and home visits provide a sound basis for induction.

Children enter the nursery with standards that are well below those expected in all areas of learning. They respond positively to the high quality provision, but the majority attain standards that are below those expected at the end of the reception year. Nevertheless, this represents good achievement. Those who have special educational needs achieve very well, assisted by support staff who help focus on their specific needs. Assessments carried out on these and other children are very good and lead to accurate and well deployed records.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children are known as individuals, and feel safe, secure and valued.
- Staff respond promptly to children's needs and interests.
- Staff are very good role models.

Commentary

40. Children settle quickly into the security of the nursery and achieve well, although significant numbers are unlikely to reach the expected standards set against a very low base on entry. Staff encourage children to become independent and to consider others. They constantly remind and praise children about good manners, and gently encourage them to consider others and their environment. They learn to take turns and, by the end of the reception year, a culture of give and take is shown in their play. They develop the ability to play together, with the support of staff, who show children the enjoyment that can be gained from such play as 'Going on a Bear Hunt'. They are encouraged to tidy away toys and to help others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an immediate and on-going emphasis on speaking and listening.
- Written language is everywhere, with attractive books and opportunities to write.
- Very good planning ensures that language underpins all areas of learning.

Commentary

41. Children enter the nursery with poor communication skills, but, overall, achieve well to reach levels that are below those expected by the end of the reception year. Some children achieve very well and read simple sentences, whilst others do not make the same amount of progress. Children receive very good levels of individual help to support their speaking skills. Staff model correct speech and language structures and encourage children to repeat them as many still rely on nods or one word answers. They also constantly introduce children to more complex language in order to widen their vocabulary. Children learn to handle books correctly and understand that pictures and print convey meaning. They learn to hold a pencil correctly and are encouraged to make marks to represent sounds and symbols. The teaching of reading skills is very effective. At the end of the reception class, children link sounds to letters, but their spoken language is still limited.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in their mathematical development.
- Staff constantly encourage children to use number in everyday situations.

Commentary

42. Children enter the nursery with particularly low standards in this area of learning. Most make very good progress and actually reach higher standards in mathematical understanding than in some other areas. This includes those children who have special educational needs, one of whom counted to 20, which was very good achievement. The initial emphasis is on counting at every opportunity, to which all respond. They learn to add and take numbers away practically, such as when counting numbers of children. They play with sand and water, and through this learn 'more than' and 'less than'. They are surrounded with shapes, to which there is constant reference, for example, when building with bricks, drawing berries, or making a circle in the air. They are introduced to written numbers on entry to the nursery, and learn these through fun games.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn well about the world inside and outside of school and enjoy a wide range of experiences.
- Staff encourage children to explore their surroundings using all their senses.

Commentary

43. Most children are unlikely to reach the expected standards for their age in this area of learning. Children enter the nursery with very little understanding of the world around them but gain a sound knowledge through the wealth of experiences that are provided. In addition to the opportunities given to handle sand, water and equipment, the nursery has a guinea pig and fish, which provide children with a first-hand experience of living things. Such experiences spark children's interest, to hunt for more mini-beasts, or to make a spider's web. They experience exciting visits to the local fire station, or to shops where they buy goods for a purpose and handle money. In the reception class, they explore themes and investigate different areas to their own, such as the seaside, and are encouraged to talk about their experiences in different places.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to develop a wide range of physical skills.
- Planning is very good, giving children regular opportunities to develop these skills.

Commentary

44. Significant numbers of children are unlikely to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the reception year. Although children enter the nursery and are able to climb, run and use wheeled vehicles to broadly the level expected, few use scissors, pencils or small equipment with confidence. This area of learning is still not fully developed by the time that they leave the reception class. Children have access to pencils, crayons, scissors, paint, glue and other small equipment from the time they enter the nursery. However, they need a tremendous amount of encouragement to use these, but careful planning ensures that they have the opportunity to develop these skills. Children gradually learn to cope with their own clothing, and, with constant encouragement and praise, become competent at dressing by the time they leave the reception class. At the time of the inspection, the outdoor play area was not readily available to the reception children, but this will occur when the planned changes are completed.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children experience a wide range of materials to develop their skills and imagination through careful planning.

Commentary

45. Children achieve well in this area of learning but, from a low point of entry, many are unable to reach the expected standards by the end of their reception year. They learn to paint, stick and glue to create pictures and patterns. They join in action songs and rhymes from memory, and they explore and play musical instruments. Reception children make extensive use of materials to support other areas of learning, such as painting large numbers in different primary colours. A range of dressing-up clothes enables them to engage in role-play, when going to the seaside by train, for example, and when they act out the train driver and passengers. They used the interactive whiteboard to create a train track, and imagined where it is going. The high quality teaching is reflected in the progress the children make. Staff provide a good balance between the direct teaching of specific skills, such as how to use scissors, and opportunities for imaginative exploration of different materials.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well in lessons.
- The subject is led and managed effectively.
- Standards in writing are well below average.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, owing to good adult support.
- Pupils have too few planned opportunities to develop their writing in a variety of contexts or to redraft their work to a good standard.
- A significant amount of teacher mobility and variations in the quality of teaching over recent years, have had a negative impact on pupils' progress over time.

Commentary

46. Standards in English are rising because of the school's focus on improvements in the subject including leadership and management. Standards have declined since the time of the previous inspection due to uncertainty in the leadership of the school over recent years and a high amount of teacher mobility. These factors caused significant disruption to pupils' learning and their achievement over time. The school is working hard to stem the recent decline in standards and the initiatives already in place are proving effective. When national comparative data for 2005 tests is available it is likely that, in Year 2, standards in reading and writing will be well below average and that standards in English will be below average for pupils currently in Year 6. Although about 80 per cent of pupils in Year 6 are working at the broadly expected standard, only a few are working within the higher levels. There is little difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.
47. The overall quality of teaching is good and this results in good learning. The very good leadership and management of the subject have resulted in increased consistency of provision across the school. Teachers have good relationships with their classes so that pupils work hard and concentrate on their work. In a small number of lessons, that are otherwise satisfactory, the pace of learning slows when teachers talk to the whole class for too long, as a result of which pupils have too little time to practise their independent writing. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to introduce lessons and to maximise learning. Some pupils are slow to offer answers during whole-class sessions and teachers need to expect more from them in this respect. In some good lessons, very good questioning and use of paired discussions challenged all pupils to think and voice their opinions.
48. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and the levels at which pupils are working and, consequently, plan their lessons well. In a very good Year 6 lesson all pupils made very good progress in considering how the author Michael Morpurgo developed characters in his stories. An analysis of pupils' books show that the majority of teachers take great care when marking pupils' work, indicating how they can improve. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support, which helps them to achieve well. Teachers make good use of performers, storytellers and authors to excite pupils' interest in the subject, and to support their spiritual, social and cultural development.
49. Standards in speaking and listening are below average in Year 2. Encouraging better standards of oral work is rightly on the agenda for gradual improvement. Younger pupils are limited by a restricted vocabulary because of their well below average attainment on entry to the school. Older pupils become more confident when speaking to large groups, such as in whole-class sessions and assemblies, and like to speak to visitors about the work they do in school. Pupils in Year 6 attain average standards in this aspect of the subject. In most lessons, teachers try to extend pupils' vocabulary and to get them to communicate effectively

by encouraging paired discussions in lessons and challenging pupils to use interesting vocabulary both in their speaking and writing.

50. Pupils achieve well in reading, and standards are rising as the school places significant emphasis on this aspect. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their reading and many are members of the local library. There is an increased emphasis on teaching phonics, (a method of teaching reading based on sounds), and, as a result, younger pupils are building up a range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. There are good opportunities for pupils to engage in group, paired and silent reading. All pupils are encouraged to read regularly at home and, when younger pupils read with parents or carers, it helps them to move forward quicker. Reading records show that the majority of parents are well involved in their children's progress in reading and there is good communication between parents and class teachers. From discussions with Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, most readers realise the good progress they are making and the help they still need.
51. Standards in writing are well below average for pupils currently in Years 2 and 6. The school has wisely shifted its focus to writing and is exploring all avenues to improve provision. Pupils achieve well in English lessons because of the good quality teaching they receive. They show good progress in learning the skills they need to write but are not yet transferring these effectively to their independent writing in English and other subjects of the curriculum. Standards are rising because teachers have an improved understanding of the levels at which pupils are working, and assessment information is well used to set challenging targets for pupils to achieve. The school is working hard on improving pupils' structuring of sentences and the standard of their spelling. In its drive to raise standards, the school also needs to consider giving pupils time to redraft their work so that the final draft is of good quality in response to teachers' marking.
52. The school gathers a good volume of assessment information and has developed a manageable system for analysing these. Individual progress is carefully tracked and the progress of different groups of pupils monitored. These systems have recently been introduced and are effective in helping the school to detect areas of strength and concern. The subject has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. The co-ordinator's action plan recognises the need to provide pupils with more opportunities for good quality writing across the curriculum, including ICT. Teachers now need to expect more from pupils' in researching topics for themselves in religious education, for example, and in the quality of their written work in this and other subjects. The over-use of worksheets in topic work also limits opportunities for extended, interesting writing in subjects such as history.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' standards are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Leadership and management are good and help to improve both standards and provision.
- Most pupils enjoy their lessons and try their best.

Commentary

54. Although pupils' standards are currently below average, the good teaching and careful leadership and management of mathematics ensure that pupils continue to achieve well. Staff

changes, and disruption to subject leadership over time, have inevitably affected pupils' standards since the previous inspection. However, the subject has now a much more settled feel and a renewed level of consistency. Considerable effort has been given to ensuring that pupils' standards were raised in Years 1 and 2 and this has now happened, with pupils continuing to achieve well set against a position of well below average attainment on entry. The school's Year 2 results were in the bottom five per cent last year, but are currently much closer to the national average, despite remaining below average, overall. Pupils in Year 6 are slightly below the national average because of the current lack of higher-attaining pupils, as well as the impact of pupil mobility and the staff changes, which occurred when they were lower down the school. There are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys, and pupils with special educational needs achieve well set against their previous learning and current targets. They are well supported in class.

55. The subject co-ordinator has become skilled at studying past and present data in order to identify areas of potential weakness. She has also undertaken some useful work in pinpointing where pupils would benefit from even stronger teaching and staff have been quick to vary their approach. Lessons are currently planned well and generally have a good pace to encourage rapid learning. Lessons also show that activities are usually well-matched to the pupils' ability. Higher-attaining pupils are now better targeted than at the time of the previous inspection, although the relatively few pupils who achieve the higher levels is a reason for the overall below-average attainment. Most staff are skilled in supporting pupils with special educational needs and several lower-attaining pupils benefit from lessons in the LRB, working alongside specialised staff and in smaller groups. Staff have rightly focused most recently on the four operations of number and now need to ensure that pupils are more adept at using these to solve problems. Older pupils in particular are becoming more adept at using different mathematical strategies in order to secure the right answer. However, pupils as a whole are not confident enough with their use and understanding of mathematical language.
56. The assessments and records of pupils' achievements are good and the results are used effectively to set individual and group targets for the future. The pupils have their own target books and are encouraged to fill these in on a regular basis as their standards improve. However, teachers' marking is inconsistent and often fails to make it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Standards of presentation could also be improved in several classes. Despite this, pupils clearly enjoy mathematics and apply themselves well to the subject on a daily basis.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. This is a satisfactory part of overall provision, but there is room for improvement. ICT is underused as a resource to help express mathematical data in its many forms and to assist teaching and learning in general. Pupils use measurements to good effect in design and technology and, as the pupils' confidence grows, staff are giving them more everyday problems, the solving of which demands mathematical ability and understanding. Pupils also use their mathematics when working on scale, such as map work in geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well to attain standards that are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Learning is usually based around well-planned investigative activities.
- The good leadership and management help give the subject clear direction and focus.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide a clear target for improvement.
- Tasks provided do not always match the ability of the pupils.
- Presentation of written work is often poor.

Commentary

58. Standards seen at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average and match those attained in the 2004 Standard Attainment Tests. Lower standards were seen in 'Materials and their Properties', partly due to this area of learning not having been revisited as regularly as some of the others. Standards seen at the end of Year 2 are also in line with the national average. Pupils enter the school with standards that are below those expected, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well to reach their current standards by the end of Year 6. There are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys. The subject has continued to develop well since the previous inspection.
59. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. The strongest teaching is through practical investigations, in which pupils are fully involved in their learning and enjoy the experience. Where teaching is particularly effective, teachers ask challenging questions that encourage pupils to think and recall their previous learning. This both reinforces and extends their knowledge and understanding. These lessons encourage pupils to think more deeply around each topic and to challenge the more able pupils in particular. This type of approach has improved since the last inspection and has led to more consistently high attainment. In one lesson, pupils were not provided with tasks that matched their ability; the higher-attaining pupils were not sufficiently challenged and the less able found the task difficult. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but targets for improvement are not always given. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' work and assessment booklets are used very well to provide accurate and detailed National Curriculum levels.
60. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn mainly by investigation, and their understanding of a 'fair test' and working out how to arrive at an answer, are to a higher level than expected. They also have a sound understanding of living things and the properties of materials. Some pupils reach the higher level when exploring electrical circuits, while their understanding of other physical processes is broadly average.
61. In Years 3 to 6, pupils gain a sound understanding of the aims of scientific investigations. In Year 3, they predict the possible outcome without using known evidence. By Year 4, pupils use evidence sensibly, and the higher attainers in Year 6 suggest improvements to the experiments, such as a repetition, in order to provide a more solid base of evidence. All pupils know how to conduct a 'fair test', but only from Year 4 do pupils understand the reasons for this. Pupils' understanding of 'Materials and their Properties' is to the expected levels only, the higher attainers not achieving higher levels. This was seen in their study of mixtures, which the teacher revisited to ensure understanding. The understanding of physical properties, such as those in electricity, is well understood, with pupils knowing the effect of various bulbs and batteries in circuits, to the level expected for their age. The presentation of pupils' work is often poor, so that pupils do not see the processes of an investigation clearly laid out.
62. Leadership and management of science are good. The co-ordinator is experienced and a clear evaluation of any variations in attainment has been made. This will provide a basis for changes in the syllabus and allow more regular revisiting of areas of learning. In the past year there has been little opportunity to monitor the teaching of the subject across all years, which is important in order to raise standards. A portfolio of work is being compiled, to assist in the moderation of standards. Assessment is very good in Years 1 and 2, but a consistent programme based on assessment for learning is not yet fully developed throughout the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good recent improvement in accommodation and resources.
- Good leadership and management have resulted in improvements in teaching and learning.
- Teaching in the computer suite is good and pupils achieve well. The use of classroom computers to support learning across a range of subjects is underdeveloped.

Commentary

63. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 are in line with expectations, which is a significant improvement over the previous inspection. Although learners currently in Year 6 attain below-average standards, most still achieve well throughout the school. All pupils are now taught in a newly developed computer suite and appropriate skills are being taught in all year groups. However, these improvements in provision have been too recent for pupils in Year 6 to have covered in depth all the aspects required. Pupils are taught to manipulate text by changing font, size, style and colour and to produce work with text, maps, graphs and pictures. By the end of Year 6, pupils have experience of multi-media presentation and access information using CD-ROMs and the Internet. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were observed being taught successfully to make, test, improve and refine sequences of instructions in order to turn sets of lights on and off.
64. The quality of teaching and learning observed in the suite during the inspection was good, overall. Teachers plan effectively using national guidance for the subject. Teachers and support staff are confident in teaching the subject because of the good training they have received. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were taught effectively to write a set of instructions to control a programmable toy to move between landmarks on a floor map. Effective use of support staff allowed class teachers to group pupils so that all were fully included as they worked in small groups. Throughout the school, pupils' enthusiasm, good behaviour and willingness to help each other, make a very positive contribution to their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils because they receive good quality support. Teachers make sure to include all pupils in their lessons and there is a healthy interest in the subject across the school. The co-ordinator's action plan identifies the need to provide further training to help increase teachers' knowledge and understanding of assessment and target-setting in the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The use of ICT across the curriculum is not yet bedded in. However, work on display shows some good examples of pupils using the computers in the suite to support learning in literacy, art, and history. Pupils in Year 2 use the program Colour Magic to produce their own pictures in the style of Mondrian, whilst pupils in Year 4 produced symmetrical shapes similar to those found in Islamic Art. Also on display is evidence of the use of the Internet to find information about the Romans. Pupils in Year 5 were using sensors to record changes in temperature, linked to their work in science. Teachers make effective use of Interactive whiteboards to introduce their lessons and to maximise pupils' learning. The co-ordinator has appropriate plans to make more regular use of classroom computers so that pupils can use ICT as a support tool in a much wider range of contexts.

HUMANITIES

66. It was not possible to study the provision of history and geography in any depth and so these subjects were only sampled in order to get a feel of what pupils' had achieved. In **history**, the pupils' standards equate to those broadly expected by the end of Year 2. Pupils have a clear

understanding of 'then and now', and can talk with understanding about why life was different in the times of their great grandparents. They also explained in detail the causes and effects of events, such as 'The Great Fire of London'. At the end of Year 6, pupils reveal standards that are below those expected. Knowledge, recall and understanding, across their projects, are relatively weak. Most know that there are different periods of history and use sources of information well. Many know something of the history of their local area. Overall, this is satisfactory achievement, as pupils enter the school with a low level of understanding of the world.

67. In **geography**, scrutiny of work and talking to pupils in Years 1 and 2, shows that standards in those year groups are broadly as expected for the age of the pupils. Pupils have a sound knowledge of their own village and talked animatedly about the environment and how it could be improved. From scrutiny of work and talking to pupils, standards in Year 6 are below those expected. Pupils use geographical terms accurately when talking about their own area, but have a limited knowledge of other places. Through their study of tsunamis, they understand that earthquakes are mostly caused by the movement of plates and learn to a satisfactory level. Following their visit to the Lake District, pupils also used maps to a sound level.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectation by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for the subject, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- There is good guidance within the agreed syllabus and in other shared resources.
- The subject would benefit from a higher profile in the total curriculum.

Commentary

68. Pupils' standards in Years 1 and 2 have stayed broadly similar since the previous inspection, but those in Year 6 have fallen over time. Whilst remaining satisfactory, overall, recent provision has been affected by staff changes and the subject needs to regain a greater sense of importance and value in the curriculum. Currently, there is too little emphasis on good quality recorded work and, particularly among older pupils, the opportunity to use ICT and individual research to develop knowledge and understanding.
69. In Years 1 and 2, pupils attain the expected standards for their age and most have a satisfactory grasp of the life of Jesus, the importance of different festivals and what one would expect to see in different churches. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily because the teachers build on the pupils' knowledge and experiences in a meaningful way. There are also good links made with topics introduced during collective worship. Whilst achieving satisfactorily, pupils in Year 6 have received rather a fragmented programme of religious education this year and this is reflected in their unsatisfactory knowledge of the Bible, local saints and comparative religions. The observed teaching and learning were satisfactory across the school and pupils show a keen interest in what they are asked to do. However, the amount of work recorded in the pupils' books or on worksheets, is not always detailed enough and there are lost opportunities for developing greater understanding using various texts and the Internet. The recall by Year 6 pupils of their past work is also unsatisfactory. The subject resources are attractive and are well used, including those which help pupils to learn about topics such as Sikhism and Hinduism.
70. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily and there are secure plans for subject development, including the eradication of some of the issues raised above. The school is also well placed for subject improvement in relation to the wide range of ideas included in the agreed syllabus and lesson plans supplied from the local authority.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

71. Very few lessons were available for observation in either art and design or design and technology, making it difficult to judge overall provision in these subjects. It was also not possible to make a judgement on the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievements. However, teachers' files show that these subjects are planned for satisfactorily during the year and are developed appropriately across the school.
72. In **art and design**, displays around the school clearly show that visits are used well to enrich the curriculum. A recent visit to the Durham Light Infantry Museum enabled pupils in Year 5 to focus on water-colours, seascapes and modern art. ICT is used well to promote the subject. Displays indicate that most classes have used computer programs to form pictures and patterns. Pupils' cultural and mathematical development was particularly well reinforced as pupils in Year 4 produced symmetrical patterns similar to those found in Islamic art. Photographic evidence showed that visiting artists enhance learning, both in the subject and in the pupils' cultural development. For example, the Chinese Day was a great success. In **design and technology**, there is satisfactory emphasis on the design as well as the making stage and older pupils in particular are encouraged to evaluate and comment on their finished work. Pupils are given a wide range of materials to make, including model climbing-frames from constructional straws (Year 1) and different types of slippers (Year 6). Most of the work is displayed attractively, giving the pupils additional ideas and interest.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a good subject for pupil inclusion, with a strong emphasis on practical enjoyment.
- There is a good curriculum with lots of ideas to support the non-specialist teacher.
- Teaching is effective and leads to pupils achieving well.
- Strong leadership and management ensure that music has a good profile in the school.
- The means of assessing and recording what individual pupils achieve could be improved.

Commentary

73. Music has progressed well since the previous inspection, when pupils shared only a few musical experiences. The chosen programme of work encourages both staff and pupils to enjoy making music whilst still teaching and learning all the essential elements, such as listening and appraising and evaluating performance. The music observed illustrated both teacher and pupil enthusiasm for their hands-on approach.
74. Observed lessons also showed pupils achieving well because of careful planning and increased teacher knowledge. The subject is good for pupil involvement. There were several instances, for example, of pupils with special educational needs and those from the Language Resource Base, joining in whole-heartedly and successfully. In a particularly good lesson in Year 2, staff from the Base led the bulk of the session and the extra adults increased pupils' enjoyment and achievement. There is good emphasis on listening to different forms of music as well as creating and performing. Older pupils were successful in observing how different moods can be generated by music in its many forms and were able to work successfully in groups with percussion, creating their own moods. Year 2 pupils were able to achieve satisfactory standards using instruments to depict different types of weather. Singing is undertaken with enthusiasm and enjoyment and the pupils' attitude to music undoubtedly helps their own progress. The subject is used well to help pupils in their own cultural and spiritual development. The methods of assessing what individual pupils attain in music has not been formally agreed and acted on and this is an area for subject improvement.

75. The curriculum is well planned, ensuring that all musical elements are taught and learned over a typical school year. The pupils' musical experiences are also enhanced by occasional visiting musicians and through participation in after-school clubs, such as recorder and singing groups. Some older pupils are able to take up brass tuition. The subject is well led and managed and the co-ordinator acts as a catalyst for good practice as well as raising the profile of music in the school in general.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching of games' skills is good.
- A good range of extra-curricular sport enhances the curriculum.
- The subject contributes well to pupils' social development.
- The subject is well led and managed and the quality of teaching and learning is good.

Commentary

76. Lessons in games and athletics were observed during the inspection. Standards attained by pupils in games are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 4 attend swimming lessons at the local pool and records show that the majority of pupils achieve the expected standard by the time they leave the school. No firm judgements can be made on standards in gymnastics and dance as no lessons in these elements were seen. However, planning shows that all aspects of the subject are taught during the year. Teachers report that pupils achieve well in outdoor and adventurous activities, such as abseiling and canoeing, during the annual residential trip. The curriculum and pupils' social development are enriched well through a good range of extra-curricular sports' clubs. The school has received the Healthy School's Award for this area of its work.
77. The quality of teaching and learning seen in games' lessons was good, overall. Teaching is guided by a broad and balanced curriculum, which is designed to promote pupils' physical development and a sense of achievement. Teachers manage behaviour very well so that all pupils work together happily and safely. As a result of the teachers' high expectations and the good relationships they establish in their classes, pupils enjoy their physical education lessons, behave well and work constructively together. Teachers and support staff are well aware of the needs of less able pupils and those with special educational needs and ensure that boys and girls of all abilities are fully included in lessons. They make good use of pupil demonstration as a stimulus for improvement, and of competitive, small-sided games so that pupils can apply the skills they have been taught.
78. The good accommodation, resources and equipment, allow the subject to be taught effectively. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and provides good advice for teachers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

79. The school continues to raise the profile of this aspect of the pupils' development and some good work has occurred following the appointment of a subject co-ordinator for **PSHCE**. There is already good emphasis on creating a positive social climate in which pupils are confident to express themselves and to mature as individuals. Many of the school's aims already centre on this form of development and the outcomes, such as positive relationships and good behaviour, have been quick to follow. The impact of the school council and of lessons involving 'circle time' are already evident. The co-ordinator feels correctly that the time is right to ensure that the subject is taught more formally, possibly following a structured programme,

which will build up pupils' skills and experiences over time. Some good progress has already occurred this year when establishing golden rules for class behaviour, and these have clearly been negotiated and ultimately owned by the pupils themselves. The successful integration of pupils from the Language Resource Base into mainstream classes has contributed much to the school's ongoing PSHCE programme. Pupils also gained a great deal from their participation in winning the Healthy School's Award. The school council relates to the whole school and has involved pupils in such decisions as how to improve the play yards and school grounds. The pupils' social and cultural development has been strengthened by attendance at such activities as the Breakfast Club, the residential period in the Lake District and the many out-of-hours clubs. The co-ordinator has also been quick to identify the value of PSHCE being taught across all subjects in the curriculum and that additional training for staff will be necessary for this to be achieved.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
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	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

