

INSPECTION REPORT

Percy Main Primary School

North Shields

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108572

Headteacher: Mr M Harrison

Lead inspector: Mr G T Storer

Dates of inspection: 28th June – 1st July 2004

Inspection number: 269942

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
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 264

School address: Nelson Terrace
Percy Main
North Shields
Postcode: NE29 6JA

Telephone number: 0191 2006343
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Graham

Date of previous 6th December 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Percy Main Primary School is situated on the edge of North Shields close to the river Tyne. Most pupils come from the community in the immediate vicinity of the school, although some pupils come from further afield. With 264 pupils on the school roll, this school is larger than the average primary school, although pupil numbers are falling as families move out of the area. During the last school year, the proportion of pupils (just over 45 per cent) known to be eligible for free school meals was well above the national average and reflects high levels of hardship and deprivation within the community. The school's social and educational circumstances have become increasingly challenging. Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average for their age. There are 62 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and two who need support from trained assistants. The overall number of pupils who have special educational needs is average for a school of this size, although the number of pupils with Statements is below average. There are four pupils who come from ethnic minority backgrounds and one speaks English as an additional language. This is low in comparison with schools nationally. The annual turnover of pupils is also quite high. During the last school year, 46 pupils (almost one in every five) entered or, in the majority of cases, left the school at times other than at the beginning of the Foundation Stage or the end of Year 6. The school received an Achievement Award in 2000. However, the need to reorganise classes in response to a falling school roll has presented considerable barriers to the raising of standards in Years 3 to 6.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--|
| 19830 | Mr G T Storer | Lead inspector | Science Information and communication technology Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship |
| 9884 | Mrs M Roscoe | Lay inspector | |
| 20646 | Mrs M Palmer | Team inspector | Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music |
| 19120 | Mr D Pattinson | Team inspector | Special educational needs English Geography History Religious education |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils make very good progress to reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Pupils also make very good progress in their personal development. Teaching is good and the curriculum engages and motivates pupils. The headteacher leads the school well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children get a good start to their education in nursery and reception classes.
- Most pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve very well in English, mathematics and science, although standards in religious education and geography are not high enough.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes, most behave well and relationships at all levels are very good.
- Teachers in Years 1 to 6 do not use assessment information systematically enough in planning the next stages of pupils' learning.
- The headteacher leads the school well so that the school fulfils its principal aims.
- Pupils' experience in school is rich and varied. Their involvement in sport and the good range of educational visits, visitors and special events bring learning to life.
- Procedures for evaluating the school and for planning for improvement are unsatisfactory.
- Parents do not fully understand the school's arrangements for dealing with their concerns about alleged incidents of bullying.

The rate of improvement since its last inspection has been good. The standards that 11-year-olds achieve are much higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Arrangements for promoting pupils' personal development are more effective and pupils' attendance and punctuality are better than they were. The school has successfully addressed most of the issues arising from its last inspection. Improvements to the outdoor environment have been particularly successful, although there is still work to be done on the monitoring of teaching and of other aspects of the work of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| English | D | E | E | E |
| Mathematics | D | C | E | C |
| Science | E | E | E | C |

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

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

Overall, pupils achieve very well. When children enter the school, most are at a level that is well below average for their age. Many have poor social and communication skills and very little experience of the world beyond the home. Nevertheless, almost all make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and their progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good. However, despite good levels of achievement, standards remain below average by the end of the reception year. In the 2003 national tests for seven-year-olds,

pupils' scores were above average overall. Inspection evidence and the unpublished results from the most recent tests indicate that standards are lower this year. This does not indicate a drop in the quality of teaching or learning. Results are lower this year because fewer pupils in the current Year 2 have the potential to reach the higher levels of attainment and this is likely to reduce school's overall score. Nevertheless, the majority of pupils are set to attain or exceed the nationally expected standards¹ for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of the school year. The table above does not do justice to the achievements of pupils currently in Year 6. Inspection evidence and the unpublished results from the 2004 tests indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science are improving. Most pupils are attaining the nationally expected standards for their age, with about 40 per cent exceeding national expectations. Standards are above the 2003 national average and high in comparison with schools facing similar social and educational circumstances. This represents very good progress and achievement from pupils' well below average attainments on entry. Standards in history and in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations by the time pupils leave the school, although standards in geography and in religious education are not high enough. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about other subjects, although examples of work seen were generally satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the individual targets identified for them and there are no significant differences between the performances of boys and girls.

Pupils achieve good standards in relation to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved. Most enjoy learning and are well motivated. They are confident in their ability to succeed and older pupils rise to the challenge to do their best. Pupils respect one another and act on their understanding of right and wrong. Pupils' appreciation of their responsibilities as members of a community is very good and relationships are very positive. Pupils' attendance has also improved since the last inspection and is now good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Throughout the school, teaching is good in a high proportion of lessons and there are examples of very good teaching in Years 1 to 6. Teaching is effective because teachers plan work that engages pupils' interest and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response. However, teachers in Years 1 to 6 do not use assessment information systematically enough to plan for pupils with different capabilities. The basic curriculum is satisfactory and the school provides a good range of sporting, cultural, educational and fun activities that bring the best out of the pupils and add considerably to the quality of their learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership. He ensures a strong sense of purpose amongst staff that ensures that the school meets its principal aims. However, staff with management responsibilities are not able to contribute effectively to planning to improve the school because arrangements for monitoring standards and quality in most areas are unsatisfactory. Similarly, governors are not

¹ The nationally expected standard for pupils at the end of Year 2 is National Curriculum Level 2. Pupils who achieve Level 3 in Year 2 are exceeding national expectations. However, Level 2 is made up of Levels 2A, 2B and 2C and the proportions of pupils achieving each sub-level affect the school's average points score. At the end of Year 6, the expected level is national Curriculum Level 4. Pupils who achieve Level 5 are exceeding national expectations.

rigorous enough in checking aspects of the school's work and in holding the school to account for what it achieves.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are well satisfied with the school. Parents think that Percy Main is a good school. They particularly appreciate the quality of teaching and the fact that teachers expect their children to work hard and encourage them to become mature and responsible. A few parents have concerns about pupils' behaviour and about bullying. Inspectors found no evidence to support parents' concerns, although the school could do more to ensure that all parents understand its policies and procedures for dealing with these matters. Pupils are most happy that they learn new things in lessons and that there are adults to turn to if they are worried.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in geography and religious education;
- ensure that teachers use assessment information more systematically to plan for pupils with different capabilities and to give pupils a clearer understanding of how they can improve;
- give subject leaders the time that they need to monitor teaching and learning more thoroughly;
- make the school's self-evaluation more rigorous and ensure that the school development plan puts in place a more systematic programme of measures to address the school's priorities;
- ensure that governors hold the headteacher and staff to account for achieving key priorities;
- improve procedures for dealing with parents' concerns.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

By the end of the Foundation Stage², children's attainments are **below national expectations**. Nevertheless, their achievements are **good** in relation to their low attainment on entry. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are also currently **below national expectations**. Pupils in Year 6 have achieved **very well** over time. Their standards in all core subjects³ will be **above average** by the time they leave the school and considerably higher than they were at the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage make good overall progress and very good progress in personal, social and emotional development.
- In Years 1 and 2, most pupils are on course to attain nationally expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Few pupils are set to exceed national expectations by the end of Year 2 and, for this reason, overall standards are below average.
- Most pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain the nationally expected standards in all core subjects and many are set to achieve above average standards.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in geography and religious education are below those normally expected of pupils of this age.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They make good progress towards their individual targets.

Commentary

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores⁴ in 2003

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.6 (16.0) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 14.6 (14.0) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 17.8 (15.3) | 16.3 (16.5) |

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

Key Stage 2

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
|---------------|----------------|------------------|

² The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage, preparing children for later schooling, and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development, but also include knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.

³ The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

⁴ Average point scores are a statistical method for comparing a school's performance in a single core subject or in all core subjects with the performance of all schools or of similar schools. The school's scores are derived from the levels that pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve in the annual National Curriculum tests.

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| English | 23.8 (24.6) | 26.8 (27.0) |
| mathematics | 25.4 (36.6) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 27.2 (27.2) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Children enter the school performing at levels that are well below average for their age. Most have poor social skills, their language and communication skills are weak and most have very little experience of the world beyond the home. Nevertheless, almost all children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and, for many, progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good. Consequently, children attain most of the early learning goals in this area of learning and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. However, despite good levels of achievement, many children do not attain the nationally expected standards in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development and so overall standards remain below average by the end of the Foundation Stage.
2. In the 2003 national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds, taken together, the school's results in reading, writing, mathematics and science were above the national average and very high in comparison with similar schools. Inspection evidence and the unpublished results from 2004 indicate that standards in the current Year 2 are lower. Standards in mathematics are broadly average but standards in reading, writing and science are below average. In fact, the majority of pupils attain the nationally expected standard in all core subjects, although few attain the above average standard. This does not indicate a drop in the quality of teaching or learning. Results are lower this year because fewer pupils in the current Year 2 have the potential to reach the higher levels of attainment and this reduces school's overall score.
3. In the 2003 tests for 11-year-olds, results in English, mathematics and science were well below the national average, although overall they were in line with results in similar schools. However, inspection evidence and the unpublished results of the most recent national tests indicate that standards are set to rise. Most pupils are attaining the nationally expected standard for their age, with almost half achieving the above average level. These improvements result, in part, from differences in the make-up of the year groups concerned, but also from on-going improvements to teaching and learning in the core subjects. Current standards are above the 2003 national average and high in comparison with schools facing similar social and educational circumstances. This represents very good progress and achievement from pupils who came to the school with well below average attainment on entry.
4. Standards in history and in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations by the time pupils leave the school, although standards in geography and in religious education are not high enough. In geography and in religious education, coverage of the curriculum is shallow and incomplete and so there are significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about other subjects, although examples of work seen were generally satisfactory.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the individual targets identified for them. Teachers and special needs support assistants plan carefully and match tasks to pupils' specific needs. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Most pupils have **good attitudes** to school and **behave well**. Relationships are **very good**. Attendance has improved and is now **in line** with the national average for primary schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery and reception classes settle to school routines and grow in confidence.
- Pupils have good attitudes and are keen to do well.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- Relationships are very good.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development effectively.
- The school has been successful in its drive to improve pupils' attendance.

Commentary

6. The school has very good arrangements for introducing children to school life. Visits to the school ensure that children and their parents know what to expect and are familiar with the adults who will be working with them. In addition, the very detailed and well presented information that parents receive ensures that parents know how to give their children and the school the best possible support throughout their children's time in the Foundation Stage. Staff create a welcoming atmosphere and the Nursery Nurses do a particularly good job in establishing routines and expectations and in supporting those children who have little experience outside the home. Therefore, children feel secure in the nursery and reception classes. They settle and soon begin to adopt helpful patterns of behaviour. Most are happy, respond well to all adults and work and play co-operatively.
7. The pupils' questionnaire indicated that most pupils like their school because they learn new things in lessons, because teachers are fair and listen to their ideas and because there are trusted adults to turn to if they are worried. Inspection evidence supports these views. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are good, they are keen to learn and try hard. These positive attitudes improve pupils' learning and progress.
8. Pupils behave well because teachers and supervisory staff insist on good standards of behaviour. This is an improvement on the standards of behaviour management reported by the previous inspection. Staff use rewards and sanctions consistently and take the time to explain why a particular action is unkind or wrong. Consequently, most pupils understand the consequences of their actions. The school excluded two pupils from school for fixed periods during the last school year.

Exclusions

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 86 | 2 | 0 |

9. The playground is a lively, yet harmonious place. Pupils play happily in groups that are mixed in terms of age and gender. Older pupils look after and play with younger pupils. Pupils confirm that they do not suffer abuse or harassment at school. Most pupils respect the school site. There is very little litter and no evidence of damage caused by pupils. Supervisory staff are vigilant and interact well with pupils to encourage positive play. However, they do not record all incidents, which means that some pupils' concerns do not receive attention as promptly as they should.
10. Relationships are very good. Conversations are characterised by mutual respect. Staff rarely shout or speak aggressively to pupils and most pupils follow their good example. Pupils get along well with one another and so collaborate easily in joint activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 were keen to help each other by sharing tips that enabled friends to overcome problems during an ICT activity. This level of co-operation and mutual support improves pupils' learning considerably.
11. The school promotes pupils' personal development successfully. Pupils achieve good standards in relation to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Arrangements that foster pupils' social development are particularly effective. Pupils have lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship every week and other subjects such as geography and science make a satisfactory contribution to this area of the work of the school. Special projects, such as the making of two outstandingly beautiful

quilts, the creation of a 'native American' garden and other initiatives designed to improve the school environment have involved many pupils over a number of years. Such projects have become 'a way of life' at this school. They give pupils the chance to confront environmental issues, to learn about the lives of children in other countries, to work alongside artists and craftspeople and to commit time and effort to improving their own and others' environments. As a result, pupils are reflective and are sensitive each other's feelings and to things of beauty. They respect one another and act on their understanding of what is right and wrong.

12. Attendance is good. Figures for this school year are the best for some time and are better than those in many schools nationally. Punctuality is satisfactory. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance levels and ensuring that all absences are followed up each day. Parents make good efforts to ensure the attendance of their children and the learning mentor provides a good link between home and school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data: | 5.0 | School data: | 0.8 |
| National data: | 5.4 | National data: | 0.4 |

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** education for its pupils. Teaching is **good** and the curriculum engages and motivates pupils. The school provides a **good** level of care, although some procedures need to be strengthened. Links with parents are **satisfactory** and those with the community are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. However, teachers' use of assessment information in their planning for some subjects is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- Very good relationships underpin pupils' positive response in lessons and willingness to learn.
- In subjects other than mathematics, teachers do not use assessment effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 10 (25%) | 19 (48%) | 11 (27%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

13. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Almost three quarters of all lessons seen during the inspection were good or very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.
14. All teachers establish very good relationships with pupils. They have high expectations of pupils' involvement and attitudes to work. They manage pupils effectively and establish classroom routines that successfully promote pupils' learning. This is most effective in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 where teachers introduce activities enthusiastically so that pupils are keen to be actively involved. Teachers consistently encourage and praise pupils' efforts. This very successfully motivates pupils and enhances their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are keen to participate and apply themselves to their tasks with interest. In most instances, pupils persevere with their work when they are not directly supervised and co-operate sensibly when working in small groups. Teaching is brisk and purposeful and so keeps pupils interested and involved.
15. Throughout the school, teachers plan and structure their lessons carefully. They are clear about what they want pupils to learn in the course of the session and share this with pupils so that lessons are purposeful. Teachers have wide-ranging subject knowledge. As a result, they are confident and teaching is accurate. Secure subject knowledge enables teachers to ask questions that boost pupils' learning. For example, in a very good Year 5 science lesson, probing questioning made pupils think and effectively extended their understanding of earth and space. The school makes very good use of visiting specialists to promote pupils' learning. For example, Year 3/4 pupils made very good progress in developing their skills and extending their knowledge of music from West Africa during a Djembe drumming workshop. Similarly, Year 6 pupils made very good gains in their knowledge of the water cycle during a session with a visitor from the local water company. In addition, a visiting music specialist regularly teaches pupils in Years 3 to 6. These arrangements very successfully boost pupils' interest and broaden their experiences.
16. In the nursery and reception classes, the teachers and nursery nurses work together very effectively to ensure that all children feel settled and ready to learn. In classes throughout the school, when teaching assistants give support, teachers carefully plan their contribution so that they effectively support pupils' learning. Notably, support staff successfully ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive the help and encouragement that they need to overcome their difficulties, take an active part in lessons and make the same progress as others.
17. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. The Foundation Stage staff assess children's skills thoroughly and create a worthwhile range of records. They use this information effectively in identifying individual children's development and learning needs, and in planning targeted activities for individuals and groups. The school conducts the annual statutory and optional National Curriculum tests and uses the results satisfactorily to track pupils' progress and to target additional support to meet the needs of specific groups of pupils. Assessment and recording procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good and enable pupils to make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. In Years 1 to 6, teachers check pupils' understanding by questioning them in the course of lessons, regularly marking their work and maintaining a range of class records.
18. In mathematics teachers use the results of assessment satisfactorily to plan tasks for pupils with different abilities. This planning is particularly effective in Years 5 and 6 but there are still times when teachers base work on a general appreciation of pupils' abilities and not on their recent attainments. Consequently, work is sometimes too difficult for

some or too easy for others. In other subjects, pupils generally undertake the same tasks and the only provision for pupils with different capabilities is the amount of help they receive from staff. Teachers use the information that they have to set tasks that challenge most pupils. Although this approach enables many to attain the expected standards for their age, it is nevertheless unsatisfactory because it does not ensure that all pupils make the progress that they can by building carefully on their prior learning.

19. Teachers set targets for pupils in English and mathematics. However, this important initiative is still at an early stage of development and some teachers do not yet routinely discuss targets with the pupils concerned. Consequently, it is not having a significant impact on pupils' learning or on developing their understanding of how they can improve.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum, which is enriched by a **good** range of additional activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good.
- All required subjects are taught, but some are not covered thoroughly enough.
- Links between subjects aid pupils' learning but inconsistencies in current practice restrict the development of literacy skills.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils' different capabilities and needs.
- A good range of additional activities helps to bring the curriculum to life for pupils.
- The school makes the most of its good quality accommodation to promote effective teaching and learning.

Commentary

20. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in the Foundation Stage are good and take account of the early learning goals. Children take part in a wide range of planned and carefully structured activities and experiences, which give them a good start to their education.
21. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils in Years 1 to 6. Planning indicates that all subjects are taught and that there is a clear framework to ensure that pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers give English, mathematics and science good emphasis. Consequently, pupils steadily build on their understanding as they move through the school, with many pupils achieving well. However, subject leaders do not review policies regularly to ensure that they are up to date and nobody checks that topics and other units of work contain all that they should. Therefore, subjects such as religious education and geography are not secure in all years and there are gaps in pupils learning.
22. Links between subjects make learning more relevant for pupils, but are not yet embedded in the school's work. For example, pupils increasingly use information and communication technology to support their learning in subjects such as English, geography, history, science and mathematics. The English curriculum, and especially writing, is given a high profile in order to drive up standards but inconsistent approaches to the teaching of spelling and handwriting are holding some pupils back. Pupils develop literacy skills through their work in some other subjects. However, pupils sometimes copy text unnecessarily, for example in science, which does not extend scientific understanding or develop literacy. Mathematical skills receive satisfactory reinforcement across the curriculum. Personal, social and health education is good. Links with outside agencies and with work in science and physical education ensure that topics such as sex education, healthy lifestyles and the use and misuse of drugs are thoroughly embedded in the school's work.

23. Teachers ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and give them good opportunities to succeed. The school identifies pupils with particular abilities and provides opportunities for these abilities to be fostered. In mathematics, teachers match work carefully to pupils' needs and, consequently, pupils with different capabilities achieve well. However, teachers' planning is not so well differentiated in other subjects. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they also achieve well. They receive good support, often through withdrawal from lessons. This strategy works well because support teachers and assistants are careful to follow the main lesson plan as well as focusing on pupils' specific learning difficulties. This enables pupils to succeed alongside others in the class and to make good progress towards the individual targets set for them.
24. A good range of visits, visitors, activities and special events enriches the curriculum. For example, pupils visit Beamish Museum, St. Mary's Island, the Hatton Art Gallery and a well-known pizza restaurant. Visitors include a brass ensemble, a storyteller and representatives of local services. These activities bring the curriculum to life for the pupils and make learning more enjoyable. A good range and number of well-led and popular after-school and lunchtime clubs, such as computer, judo, singing, mathematics and Spanish, benefit many pupils and extend their interests. Pupils have opportunities to engage in competitive sport through good links with neighbouring schools. Links with local high schools are good and ensure a smooth transition.
25. Internally, the accommodation is good and contains all that is necessary to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum. Recent refurbishments result in a bright and pleasant learning environment and in good use of the available space. Throughout the school, attractive displays help to motivate pupils, extend their learning and celebrate their work. Externally, there are areas that significantly enhance pupils' learning, such as the native American garden and the outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage. The quality of outdoor facilities is considerably better than it was at the time of the previous inspection and is an important factor in pupils' improved behaviour and response. Resources for the Foundation Stage of learning are good. There are adequate resources for teachers to teach the curriculum to pupils in Years 1 to 6.

Care, guidance and support

There are **satisfactory** procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety. Pastoral care is **good** with some very good features. Informal ways of seeking and acting on pupils' views are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care is good because pupils' emotional well-being is of paramount importance to all staff.
- Procedures for reviewing and evaluating policies and practice that relate to pupils' welfare, health and safety are not as thorough as they should be.
- The school does not have effective procedures for tracking and recording discipline issues during lunchtimes or for informing teachers and parents when incidents occur.
- The school celebrates pupils' academic and personal development but current systems do not result in clear guidance on how to improve.
- The school council is effective but there is no formal avenue for all pupils to have a say in whole-school policy making.

Commentary

26. Staff treat pupils with the utmost kindness and respect. This ensures pupils have the best possible chance to benefit from their time in this colourful school and easily turn to any adult for help or support. Adults are very positive role models because of the way they approach pupils and engage them in friendly conversations. Pupils and parents greatly value the work of a learning mentor, who provides well-focused support and is the driving force for many school and community initiatives. These initiatives have removed barriers to learning that could otherwise impede individual pupils' progress and have improved the attendance of a considerable number of pupils. Parents praise the care provided for their children and the quality of arrangements for settling their children into the nursery, which allow them to become familiar with teachers' expectations and with routines for learning and behaviour.
27. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory overall. The governing body regularly checks the condition of the premises and ensures that any potential hazards are identified and rectified. Similarly, items of equipment used by pupils and staff are checked annually to ensure that they are safe and in good working order. Teachers and other staff supervise pupils carefully and ensure that they work and play safely. There are, however, weaknesses in current arrangements. Procedures for reviewing and evaluating practice that relates to pupils' welfare, health and safety are not as thorough as they should be. This is because there is a lack of awareness on the part of governors and senior staff of the range of essential risk assessments demanded by law. These omissions have been brought to the headteacher's attention.
28. The behaviour management system guides pupils towards self-discipline and tolerance of others. Buddy systems work very well in promoting peaceful, co-operative playtimes and in cementing relationships between younger and older pupils. Nevertheless, a significant number of parents expressed concern with arrangements for supervision at lunchtimes. There is no evidence to confirm these anxieties because pupils do mix well and supervisory staff are vigilant. However, misunderstandings sometimes occur because supervisory staff do not keep records of all incidents and therefore senior managers are not always aware of issues or have the relevant details to hand when parents raise concerns.
29. Staff review pupils' progress regularly to check if they are learning at the right level. All achievements, academic or personal, great or small, are recognised, praised and celebrated, often in assemblies. Consequently, pupils develop confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' knowledge of how they can improve their work is a less positive picture because the systematic use of development targets for individual pupils is not consistently in place in every class.
30. Pupils seek others' views during class council sessions and reflect these in school council meetings. The group has worked enthusiastically to improve the quality of playtimes because they take their roles very seriously. This is an improvement on arrangements at the time of the previous inspection when pupils were not routinely consulted about aspects of school life. Because of recent success, there is now scope to extend this consultation to all pupils and to invite their active participation in future plans.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the adult education programme provided for them are **satisfactory**. There are **good** links with the community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have many good things to say about the school and particularly about the sincere care provided for their children.
- The school has lost the confidence of some parents by not alerting them promptly to issues affecting their child's emotional development and has not followed up complaints about bullying effectively.
- The school uses the community to support pupils' learning and good liaison with the local secondary school prepares pupils well for next stage of their education.
- Recently established adult education programmes provide satisfactory opportunities for parents to acquire useful skills.

Commentary

31. Most parents hold the school in high regard because of the friendly environment it provides. This encourages many parents to make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They recognise the importance of regular attendance and help as much as they can with homework. This is due to the very good information provided for each class which details what is being taught each term. Some parents indicated they would like to know how to support their children's learning at home and what they can help them with, if progress slows. Reports on progress are satisfactory but do not effectively report on every subject or include a development target.
32. Parents say that friendly teachers make for 'happy children who enjoy their learning and feel valued'. However, some feel that this situation is jeopardised by weak lines of communication with them regarding their complaints about bullying issues. Inspectors found that the school takes responsible and positive steps to eliminate all forms of harassment but has yet to decide on a system for alerting parents when upsetting incidents involving their children occur at school. The tendency is to deal with such incidents on an informal basis but this approach diminishes the concept of the home-school partnership promoted in the prospectus. Support for discipline policies has not been sought through a consultation process with parents or promoted well enough so that parents know exactly where they and their children stand.
33. Well-established links with the police, church, musicians, farms and professional support agencies enhance pupils' learning and promote their moral and social development. Nursery children are thrilled, for instance, to help incubate, hatch and rear ducklings from a local farm and teach them to swim. Contacts with the local high school ensures a smooth transition into Year 7 because of effective preparations which begin in Year 5. Various initiatives support the transfer process including high school staff sharing their expertise in some subject areas. This good practice allows pupils in their last year to get to know secondary staff and therefore feel at home when they undertake pre-arranged visits.
34. Parents have responded well to the adult education initiatives started by the learning mentor. They valued the consultation process, which brought them 'stress busting' and relaxation courses held at school. Through these courses, they are learning what is required to manage their children's angry moments positively and gaining a greater understanding of child development. Parents also reported an increased confidence in their organisational abilities and communication skills. They explained that the sessions are inspiring their own children to achieve more because they relish the thought of 'mum' being a learner at their school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads the school well so that it fulfils its main aims.
- The governing body fulfils statutory duties, but does not check the school's work rigorously.
- Management is satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in strategic planning because the school development group and subject leaders are not yet fully effective.
- The school provides good value for money.

Commentary

35. The headteacher provides good leadership. He is a caring and experienced leader who has a clear vision for the school. Under his leadership, very good relationships have been forged among staff and pupils and with parents, and the school has developed a very supportive and encouraging atmosphere. He has established a strong sense of purpose amongst staff that ensures that the school meets its principal aims and has secured the commitment of staff and governors to school improvement. Senior staff and governors have been fully consulted to determine the school's priorities and, although these are limited in scope, all understand some of what the school needs to do to improve. The school has improved in most of the areas highlighted by the previous inspection. However, the absence of a deputy headteacher in a school of this size slows the rate of school improvement and weakens the leadership and management of the school as a whole, despite the headteacher's best efforts.
36. The governing body provides satisfactory support for the headteacher and carries out its statutory duties well. All committees meet regularly in order to support the headteacher and staff. Governors know about the strengths of the school and some of the areas where it needs to improve. Governors linked to core subjects and special educational needs take a keen and active interest. However, the governing body is not rigorous enough in checking aspects of the school's work in the important areas such as curriculum development and health and safety, or in holding the school to account for what it achieves. Consequently, it does not challenge the headteacher and school development group enough or ensure that it shapes the future direction of the school.
37. Senior staff and subject leaders carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily. However, they are not fully effective because they are not given the necessary time to monitor standards and quality regularly or rigorously. Therefore, they do not have an informed and accurate overview of strengths and weaknesses in the subjects for which they are responsible. Consequently, school improvement plans and subject action plans are limited in scope and so do not provide useful tools for school and subject development. The framework for these plans also has omissions, which limit what they can achieve. For example, targets are too broad. Current plans do not establish a systematic approach that specifies exactly who will do what, how or when. Similarly, they do not specify precise costs of planned developments. These omissions reduce the capacity of senior staff to monitor planned developments in ways which ensure their success.
38. Arrangements for the school's self-evaluation are unsatisfactory. Performance management is now well established and linked satisfactorily to the planned provision of training for teachers and support staff. However, the headteacher has not yet established systems that secure a rigorous approach to all aspects of monitoring and evaluation. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection and has still not been satisfactorily addressed. For example, the headteacher analyses pupils' performance in the national tests. However, there are no agreed procedures to ensure that other staff use this information to overcome identified weaknesses.

Similarly, there are no systems to ensure that there is a programme of policy review and evaluation and improvement or to ensure that staff apply current policies consistently. Consequently, some policies are out of date, and what is taught does not always match current requirements, for example in religious education. The setting of individual targets by teachers to give pupils greater understanding of their learning is at a very early stage of development. Its use by teachers is inconsistent and, as such, it has yet to have an impact on standards.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 565,650 | Balance from previous year | 58,291 |
| Total expenditure | 569,953 | Balance carried forward to the next | 53,988 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,073 | | |

39. Regular monitoring of spending patterns helps to ensure that finance is used to benefit pupils. Principles of best value are soundly applied and the governing body is committed to ensuring that all funds are wisely spent. However, the current budget surplus is higher than that in many schools because money was set aside in last year's budget for the redevelopment of the computer suite, which is currently under way. The secretary works tirelessly to ensure that the school runs smoothly and that day-to-day financial management does not impinge on teaching and learning. Financial control is sound, although some areas, such as maintaining an up-to-date school inventory and implementing the recommendations of the latest auditor's report, require attention. Nevertheless, in relation to its very challenging social and educational circumstances and to the standards that pupils achieve by the end of Year 6, the school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

40. Children enter school with well below average skills, most notably in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills. In the nursery and reception classes, they make good overall progress and very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. This is because teaching is good and the children are actively involved in a good range of stimulating activities that successfully extends their knowledge, skills and understanding. The teachers carefully assess what individuals know, understand and can do. They effectively use this information to identify and plan the next steps in children's learning and development. Therefore, most children are on course to attain the early learning goals⁵ for children of their age in aspects of personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. However, despite achieving well, many children are not in line to attain these standards in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development because of their very low starting point. The teachers and nursery nurses work very effectively together to support children's learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes very good arrangements for introducing children to school life.
- The teachers and nursery nurses value each child's efforts and boost their self-esteem.
- Children become confident, well-motivated learners.
- Children co-operate well with the staff and with each other.

Commentary

41. The teachers and nursery nurses very successfully ensure that each child feels included and valued so that they settle securely into the nursery and reception classes. The arrangements for children starting school promote a smooth transition from home to school very successfully and boost parents' and carers' understanding of how to support their children's learning. The teachers and nursery nurses ensure that the nursery and reception classes are welcoming and classroom systems are firmly established. They sensitively meet the needs of those children with special educational needs and carefully implement their individual education plans. As a result, all boys and girls achieve the standards expected for their age and grow in assurance in their approach to activities and daily routines.
42. Staff give lots of individual praise and encouragement so that the children are motivated to do their best and show pride in what they have achieved. The teachers plan topics that very effectively extend the children's self-knowledge and awareness of others. Many activities involve collaboration or playing co-operatively with others. These activities successfully build children's confidence in learning and in their relationships with others. Almost all children quickly learn to take turns and share. The quality of teaching is good.

⁵ Early learning goals – these are the standards that children are expected to reach by the end of their reception year.

The teachers ensure that all children have opportunities to be involved in a good range of carefully planned and prepared activities. The children are very keen to participate because they see learning as fun. They settle quickly to tasks and concentrate hard for short periods when working independently.

43. The teachers and nursery nurses have high expectations of the children's behaviour and reinforce classroom routines very consistently. The children make very good progress in learning what is expected of them so that they accept the boundaries that the school sets. They respond promptly to instructions and are beginning to clear away equipment efficiently. Children handle books and equipment carefully. They behave sensibly in the nursery and reception classrooms and when they move around school. Children in the reception class are quiet and attentive when they join older pupils for assembly.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children regularly engage in activities that successfully promote their communication skills but standards are below those normally expected at this age.
- The children make good progress in learning letter sounds and developing early reading skills.
- The teachers carefully plan worthwhile opportunities for the children to develop and improve their writing skills.

Commentary

44. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. A high proportion of children have immature speech when they first enter the nursery. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers plan regular opportunities for children to talk purposefully to adults and each other, such as during Circle Time⁶ activities. In addition, there are many well-planned opportunities for children to talk informally, as part of their imaginative play. Staff value all children's 'contributions' and listen carefully to what they have to say. A small number of children are assessed by the speech therapist and receive high quality follow-up support in class. As a result, all children gain confidence in speaking in small and larger groups and successfully reinforce and extend their speaking and listening skills. However, few use talk to express their ideas and feelings or extend their ideas using detail, without adult intervention and support, and most children's standards are below those expected for their age.
45. The teachers plan varied, well-structured early reading activities that successfully stimulate children's interest and awareness that books are fun. However, many children need support to explain elements of stories and non-fiction texts or express their opinion of them and the majority are not on course to attain the early learning goals in this area of learning.
46. Children regularly practise writing patterns and engage in activities that extend their control over small tools and markers. Children in the nursery learn that writing conveys meaning and they increasingly make marks and 'write' for themselves. Throughout the

⁶ Circle Time – when younger pupils sit together and share thoughts and feelings or talk about things that are important to or concern them.

Foundation Stage, children work regularly with adults in small groups. They try hard and make good progress in learning to hold their pencil correctly and form recognisable letters. By the time they are five, almost all children write their own name and simple words and phrases independently. A smaller proportion form simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation, but most do not attain these standards and are not on course to attain the early learning goals.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in counting and recognising numbers.
- The teacher plans stimulating activities that successfully promote children's mathematical development alongside other areas of learning.

Commentary

47. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers and nursery nurses are clear about what they want the children to learn, planning is thorough and sessions are purposeful. Children achieve well, particularly in counting and solving simple practical problems. However, few are on course to attain the early learning goals in mathematical development. The teachers plan a good balance of games and practical activities to encourage children to practise skills of counting and putting things in order. Children regularly join in lively number rhymes and songs, which successfully reinforce their learning. Most children enter school with well below average mathematical understanding and basic vocabulary. The class teachers and nursery nurses consistently check and build on individual children's mathematical language. However, many children lack the language to order three items by length and need support to describe patterns, properties and positions of two- and three-dimensional shapes.
48. The children engage in thoroughly prepared activities, such as baking, which promote their counting and measuring skills. The children also have opportunities to recognise and count coins when they have a 'shop' set up in the class. Such activities successfully support children's physical development and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world, whilst promoting their mathematical development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children acquire a secure knowledge and understanding of the world through practical activities and well-planned topics.
- Children regularly use computers and develop sound basic skills.

Commentary

49. The quality of teaching is good so that children achieve well and are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. They discover the properties of sand, water, clay and dough by handling and working with them. Teachers carefully plan

activities that very successfully stimulate children's curiosity and boost their investigative skills. The children make very good progress in learning about living things. Visitors to school, including a police officer and postman, and occasional visits, for example to a farm, very successfully extend children's experience and learning.

50. The children have frequent opportunities to use simple computer programs as part of their everyday work. In the course of their activities, the children also confidently use equipment such as tape recorders to listen to favourite stories. These activities contribute to children's growing knowledge and understanding of the world and are a firm foundation for the development of ICT skills in later years. They also add to children's enjoyment of creative, literary and mathematical tasks and so promote very positive attitudes to school life and work.

Physical development

Provision for children's physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children enjoy regular opportunities to be active both indoors and out.
- The children make satisfactory progress in developing manipulative skills.

Commentary

51. Children move safely and confidently in and around the nursery and reception classrooms. The teachers and nursery nurses consistently encourage children to be independent. They put on and take off their coats and shoes for outdoor play, put on aprons and change for physical education lessons with a minimum of adult help. The well-planned and resourced outside play areas provide the children with daily opportunities for imaginative and vigorous play. This marks a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Children play co-operatively and take turns when required to do so. Children regularly participate in physical education sessions. By the end of their reception year, almost all children display a good awareness of space as they travel safely around the hall, without bumping into each other. They demonstrate satisfactory co-ordination and control as they throw, catch and control a bouncing ball. They follow instructions promptly and behave very sensibly.
52. The quality of teaching is good. The children make good progress in developing their manipulative skills because the teachers plan a good range of activities to promote their skill and control in the handling of mark-making implements and simple equipment. Children frequently use small and large construction materials and simple tools, including scissors, drills, saws and hammers. All adults sensitively encourage the children so that they work carefully and safely. As a result, in the majority of cases, children's manipulative skills are average and most children are on course to attain the early learning goals in physical development.

Creative development

Provision for children's creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers plan thoroughly to ensure that the children have opportunities to engage in a stimulating range of creative activities.
- Children have well planned opportunities to engage in imaginative role-play.

Commentary

53. The quality of teaching is good and the children are on course to attain the early learning goals in this area of development. They join in readily with action songs and number rhymes, building up a satisfactory repertoire. The children have carefully planned opportunities to learn the names of percussion instruments and explore the sounds that they make. The children are very keen to be involved in creative activities and co-operate very sensibly. They paint confidently, both indoors and out, enjoy experimenting with colour mixing and print and using fruit and vegetables. They have frequent opportunities to participate in two- and three-dimensional projects; for example, reception children made a hedgehog from hessian, twigs and cones. The teachers carefully prepare role-play areas that reflect the children's interest or current topic, such as a hospital, travel agent or garden centre. These projects successfully engage children's interest, encourage collaboration and promote their use of imaginative language. These arrangements effectively promote children's achievement and many attain average standards.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are higher than at the time of the last inspection and most pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good overall but teachers do not always make the best use of the assessment data that they have.
- Subject leadership is satisfactory, but the co-ordinator does not have opportunities to monitor the subject effectively.
- The school promotes literacy skills through work in other subjects, but not as part of a planned programme.

Commentary

54. In Year 2 in 2003, standards in reading were above average and standards in writing were average. In both reading and writing, pupils did much better than those in similar schools. Inspection findings for the current Year 2 pupils indicate that standards are below average overall. Most pupils are attaining the nationally expected standard for their age but fewer pupils than in 2003 are exceeding national expectations. This difference in performance stems from the composition of the current Year 2 group rather than from a drop in the quality of teaching and learning. This judgement is confirmed by the school's tracking records and by the unpublished results of the 2004 national tests. Inspection findings for the current Year 6 pupils indicate that standards in English are above average. This judgement is also confirmed by the unpublished results from the most recent national tests. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 is greater than in schools nationally and much greater than in similar schools. In the current Year 6, boys and girls of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, have achieved very well in all aspects of English during their time in the school. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when standards were low and raising standards in English was an important priority for development.
55. Most teaching seen during the inspection was good, with very good teaching observed in the subject leader's class. Features of good teaching included a confident approach based on secure subject knowledge, good questioning of pupils, a brisk pace, high expectations and good relationships, which successfully underpinned learning. Because of these positive features, pupils achieve well, and sometimes very well, and have good attitudes to learning. Teachers place increasing emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills, for example through the effective questioning of pupils, although other strategies to improve this aspect require further development. For example, the use of 'talking partners' interests and involves pupils, but is not used enough in other subjects. There are not enough opportunities for role-play, drama, discussion and debate in Years 3 to 6. However, speaking is not now a weakness as at the time of the last inspection because most pupils talk and listen confidently by the time they leave the school. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes, which includes letters, instructions, poems, stories, diaries and newspaper reports. Teachers place good emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary, although the language they use is not extensive by the time they leave the school. However, teachers give too little attention to the development of pupils' handwriting and spelling. This results in standards of presentation which are unacceptably varied, as at the time of the last inspection. Well-taught guided reading sessions are helping pupils to read with good levels of fluency, accuracy and understanding. This enables pupils to make good gains as they move through the school so that many reach standards above those found nationally.

56. Teachers evaluate pupils' performance after each unit of work and those in Years 3 to 6 use the optional National Curriculum tests to assess pupils' levels of attainment and to track pupils' progress from year to year. The headteacher also analyses the outcomes of the tests for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. These arrangements are satisfactory but teachers are not making the best use of the information they have to plan the next stages of pupils' learning. There are no systems for ensuring that the outcomes of data analysis feed through to subject improvement plans. Therefore, the pace of development is slower than it should be. Teachers usually set work at different levels of difficulty, but only on the basis of a general appreciation of pupils' abilities and not on the basis of pupils' recent attainments. Consequently, there are times when work is too difficult for some or too easy for others. This is unsatisfactory because it reduces the progress that some pupils make. Most pupils now have literacy targets, such as in reading, but many do not know them well enough to help them improve because teachers seldom refer to them during lessons.
57. The subject is soundly led by a very good teacher of English. He keeps abreast of developments in the subject and provides good informal support for colleagues. However, the co-ordinator's management is not fully effective because the school does not allocate the necessary time for him to do the job properly, nor does it lay down clear expectations of what the job actually entails. He does not regularly observe lessons or scrutinise pupils' work in order to identify what works well and what needs to be improved. Consequently, plans for the subject's continued development are not rigorous enough to drive up standards further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to speak, listen, read and write as part of their work in other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils write a simple conversation as part of their work about Grace Darling in history. Similarly, Year 5 pupils write imaginative poems and learn about e-mail in links with ICT and pupils in Year 6 give detailed oral explanations of their science investigations. The use of literacy skills across the curriculum has been identified for development because current practice, though generally effective, is inconsistent.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve above average standards by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning in mathematics are very good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The co-ordinator does not have opportunities to monitor the subject effectively.

Commentary

59. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain average standards. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are above average. In the 2003 national tests for seven-year-olds, standards were well above average because of the high number of pupils exceeding the nationally expected level. In the current Year 2, there is a smaller proportion of high attaining pupils. The work of pupils in the year group and the unpublished results of the most recent national tests confirm that most pupils are attaining average standards but fewer than last year are exceeding them. Consequently, although the children are achieving well, overall results are lower than last year. In the 2003 national tests for 11-year-olds, standards were well below the national average. The work of pupils in the current Year 6 and the unpublished results of the most recent national tests confirm that standards are rising, with

a greater proportion both attaining and exceeding the average standard. Pupils' overall achievements are very good in relation to their attainment on entry to school.

60. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they are clear about what they want pupils to learn. They share these aims with the pupils at the beginning of lessons so that lessons have a sharp focus, they make and reinforce teaching points and so pupils make good progress in learning. Sessions are well structured. Lessons usually start with lively mental agility work, sometimes in the form of a game or 'challenge' that successfully engages pupils' interest. Teachers ensure that lessons proceed at a brisk pace so that pupils remain focused on their tasks. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils promote pupils' co-operative approach and very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are particularly well motivated when tasks grab their interest. For example, Year 5/6 pupils make very good progress in their work on decimals because their task is based on a table of Olympic Games results. Teachers use well-directed questions to ensure that all children are alert and thinking. Pupils make the most progress in lessons when teachers encourage them to explain their thinking and the methods they use in completing tasks. For example, Year 6 pupils explain the problems they set as they work in small groups to create a mathematical game. This strategy successfully extends pupils' thinking, whilst enabling the teacher to assess their understanding. Teachers bring pupils together at the end of lessons for a worthwhile recap of what they have achieved. They use this opportunity effectively to reinforce what pupils have learned, praise their efforts and boost their confidence.
61. Teachers prepare lessons carefully. They set tasks at generally challenging levels and children respond eagerly. However, the older pupils achieve particularly well because their tasks are consistently more closely matched to the different levels of ability within the class and build securely on what pupils have learned before. There are examples of good quality marking, for example, in Years 5 and 6, which is constructive and indicates to pupils how they can improve their work. However, this is not consistent throughout the school. Similarly, expectations of pupils' presentation of work are variable so that in some classes pupils' presentation of work is very careful, in others it is untidy. Although teachers set mathematics targets for individual pupils, they do not use them consistently to motivate pupils or to promote their understanding of their own learning. Teachers and teaching assistants are consistently encouraging and sensitive to individual pupils' concerns. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and encouragement so that they are fully involved in lessons and achieve well.
62. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory subject leadership overall. He is committed to raising standards in the subject and is involved in analysing test results and tracking pupils' progress through the school. These activities lead to the allocation of support to pupils and the setting of class targets. These strategies are helping to raise standards over time. However, the co-ordinator does not have the necessary time to observe teaching and to evaluate aspects of pupils' learning at first hand. This limits his effectiveness because he does not have a comprehensive knowledge of what is working well and what needs to be improved in order to develop the subject further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Teachers make satisfactory use of mathematics to reinforce and extend pupils' learning within other subjects. For example, there are worthwhile examples of pupils' work in ICT, history and science:
 - Year 4 pupils use a screen turtle to reinforce their knowledge of angles;
 - throughout the school pupils draw up time lines to develop their sense of chronology;
 - Year 5/6 pupils use their data handling skills to present the results of their investigations into insulating materials as line graphs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 1 and 2, too few pupils exceed the nationally expected standard for their age.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils attain above average standards in science.
- Teachers give good emphasis to experimental and investigative work.
- Teachers do not use assessment information systematically enough in planning pupils' learning.
- Subject leaders do not evaluate the school's work in science rigorously enough.

Commentary

64. Teacher assessments in 2003 indicated that all pupils in Year 2 attained the nationally expected standard for their age but that very few attained the above average level. Inspection evidence is consistent with teachers' assessments that indicate that standards are unlikely to be as high in the current Year 2. Nevertheless, most pupils are working at the expected standard for their age but again there is no evidence of pupils exceeding national expectations. Standards are lower because teachers have pitched most of their lessons at an average level and have provided too little work that is demanding enough to take pupils who are more able to the higher level. In relation to their attainment at the beginning of Year 1, most pupils are achieving satisfactory standards, although those with the potential for higher attainment are not doing as well as they should.
65. In the 2003 national tests for 11-year-olds, results in science were well below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. Most pupils attained the nationally expected standard but only one in every five pupils achieved above average standards. Inspection evidence and the unpublished results of the 2004 tests indicate that standards in the current Year 6 are considerably higher because twice as many pupils are on course for the above average level. In relation to their results at the age of seven, boys and girls in Year 6 have achieved well. This is an improvement on the standards reported by the previous inspection.
66. The teaching of science is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' planning indicates that they cover all aspects of the science curriculum thoroughly and that pupils receive a good diet of practical and investigative work to reinforce their understanding of scientific principles. For example, pupils in Year 6 have to think really hard and bring all of their scientific understanding to bear when they investigate and explain the forces at work in water. Teachers establish the habits of good behaviour and positive response that allow them to manage these practical activities effectively. This approach improves the quality of pupils' learning and adds to the progress that they make. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn and gather the necessary resources to illustrate their teaching well. They make good use of classroom assistants to support the learning of less able pupils or those with special educational needs and so these pupils are able to succeed and make progress alongside others in the class. Pupils in Year 6 also receive very thorough preparation for the national tests so that almost all pupils achieve the results of which they are capable.

67. The most important weakness in the teaching of science is that teachers do not use assessment information to modify tasks to meet the needs of pupils with different capabilities. In Years 3 to 6, the content of many practical tasks is challenging enough to take able pupils' understanding to the higher levels. However, teachers do not match recording tasks to pupils' capabilities and these do little to extend the thinking of more able pupils. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Teachers pitch almost all tasks at the average level and, as a result, a small number of more able pupils underachieve. This lack of specific planning is unsatisfactory because it restricts the progress that higher attaining pupils make.
68. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory. The school does not give subject leaders the time that they need to evaluate teaching and learning thoroughly. Consequently, subject development planning for science does not establish a rigorous agenda for improvement. This limits their capacity to secure consistent practice and plan for further improvement in their subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with national expectations by the time pupils leave the school.
- Teachers have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to teach ICT skills effectively.
- Teachers do not use assessment data thoroughly enough in planning work for pupils with different capabilities.
- Enthusiastic subject leadership means that the school is moving ahead with its planned upgrading of resources and facilities, despite the lack of time given to this task.
- Good links with other subjects improve pupils' learning.

Commentary

69. Most pupils are on course to achieve the nationally expected standards in all aspects of ICT by the time they leave the school and a small number already have above average skills. This maintains the standards reported at the time of the last inspection. This represents good progress and achievement in Years 1 to 6 from their below average attainment on entry.
70. Pupils learn well because in recent years teachers have made better use of the school's resources and facilities for teaching ICT than they did at the time of the last inspection. The school has the necessary programs to teach the ICT curriculum thoroughly and pupils have planned opportunities to use a good range of ICT equipment, including programmable toys, sound recording equipment and a digital camera. Teachers have successfully undertaken a range of training and received input, advice and support from the co-ordinator. As a result, they have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to teach ICT skills effectively and are competent and self-assured when teaching ICT.
71. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching, but in three lessons observed during the inspection, teaching and learning were good. Teachers structured sessions carefully in order to engage pupils' interest and they demonstrated new skills and techniques effectively. They successfully established good patterns of behaviour and a sensible approach to work, with the result that pupils were attentive to instructions and shared equipment co-operatively. In the Year 5 class, higher attaining pupils gave advice to less

confident pupils. Pupils' keenness to be actively involved and to share their learning with others improved their own learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and make good progress alongside others in the class. However, there are currently no effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment or for planning for pupils with different capabilities. Teachers and classroom assistants sensitively support pupils with learning difficulties and often plan extension activities for pupils who complete their tasks. However, these arrangements do not ensure that all pupils, including the more able, consistently work at the levels of which they are capable. Consequently, some pupils do not always make the progress that they should and this is unsatisfactory.

72. Subject leadership is good. The enthusiastic co-ordinator for ICT is working very hard to prepare for the introduction of planned improvements in the subject. She is committed to raising standards and has clear plans for establishing an improved computer suite, for the introduction of improved classroom resources, of cross-curricular planning and of assessment systems. However, she is hampered in this important work because the school does not allocate the necessary time for this work to be conducted in a measured and systematic way.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. Teachers make good use of ICT to reinforce and extend pupils' learning within other subjects. Examples seen or discussed during the inspection include:
- pupils from Years 1 to 6 using word processing skills to draft, edit and present their work in literacy lessons;
 - pupils in Years 3 to 6 using creative tools to make Christmas cards, to produce repeating symmetrical patterns and to manipulate photographic images;
 - Year 4 pupils devising simple programs to direct the 'screen turtle' and to reinforce their understanding of angles and directions from mathematics and geography;
 - Year 5 and 6 pupils using spreadsheets and databases to interrogate and display data gathered as part of their physical characteristics surveys in science;
 - Year 5 and 6 pupils using the Internet as a source of information for history and geography projects;
 - Year 5 pupils practising communication skills using e-mail.

HUMANITIES

This area of the curriculum was not part of the main focus of the inspection. Inspectors saw only three lessons each of history and geography, mainly in Years 3 to 6. These lessons, along with examples of pupils' completed work, work displayed around the school and teachers' planning, form the basis of judgements on provision and standards. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the overall quality of teaching and learning in these subjects or about their leadership and management.

Geography and history

Provision in history is **good**.

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in history, but less well in geography.
- Links with other subjects are evident, but need further development.
- Visits and visitors help to bring both subjects to life for pupils.
- Arrangements for assessment are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

74. Standards in **history** are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well because coverage of the various topics is thorough. Pupils develop satisfactory skills and have opportunities to present their developing knowledge of history in different ways and, in the lessons seen, teaching was good. As a result of these strengths, pupils like history and have positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils achieve less well in **geography** because teachers in many classes do not cover the subject thoroughly enough. Consequently, pupils do not develop knowledge, skills and understanding systematically and much work lacks depth. However, pupils still make satisfactory progress in limited areas. For example, Year 2 pupils compare life on a small island in the Hebrides with their own locality and start to acquire a simple geographical vocabulary. By the end of Year 6, pupils have knowledge and understanding of rivers, including the Mississippi, but to levels below national expectations.
75. In some classes, teachers make effective links with other subjects. Links with literacy and information and communication technology are particularly evident. For example in **history**, Year 4 pupils use the Internet to find out about the ancient Greeks, while pupils use ICT to produce plans of the classroom in geography. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use atlases to discover where the Vikings come from while, in a good link with literacy, they research information about aspects of their way of life. In a very good **geography** lesson in Years 5/6, pupils wrote a newspaper report about the collapse of the Holbeck Hall Hotel in Scarborough due to coastal erosion. Cross-curricular links improve pupils' learning, but require further development so that they are more consistently in place across the school.
76. Visits improve the quality of pupils' learning in both subjects. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 3 visited Beamish Museum to support their **history** work. Very good teaching following the visit ensured that pupils benefited from this experience. Strong features included very good emphasis on historical enquiry that extended pupils' knowledge of the past, secure subject knowledge and much use of praise and encouragement to keep pupils focused on their work. Therefore, most pupils consolidated their learning very well. In **geography**, Year 2 pupils visit St. Mary's Island, noting specific geographical features on the journey.
77. Displays of work, especially in history, help to motivate pupils and celebrate their achievements. However, approaches to assessing pupils' progress in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding are not yet securely in place. The marking of pupils' work is of variable quality. Teachers do not evaluate pupils' work in terms of its level and rarely show pupils how to improve. Similarly, teachers' assessments at the end of topics are very general. Consequently, work is seldom matched closely to pupils' needs and so does not ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils gain knowledge only in limited areas of the curriculum.
- Assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to work in religious education.
- The locally agreed syllabus is not followed conscientiously and for this reason teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.
- Links with other subjects, especially literacy, require further development.

Commentary

78. Overall standards are below those set out in locally agreed guidelines. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils learn about Christianity

and begin to apply what they are learning to their daily lives. However, in Years 3 to 6, teachers do not give enough emphasis to the subject, especially in Year 6, where religions other than Christianity do not receive enough attention.

79. Assembly themes, such as 'Caring', enable pupils to learn both about religion and from religion. This is because they allow pupils to apply stories from the life of Jesus to their own lives. Along with discussion time, which most classes hold regularly, pupils consider a wide range of issues which contribute to their understanding of religion. Pupils learn about the importance of courtesy, care and consideration for others. Consequently, the subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' personal development.
80. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Teachers in Years 1, 2 and 5 cover the subject more thoroughly than staff in other years and therefore pupils in these classes make satisfactory progress. However, other teachers often determine content according to their own priorities rather than according to syllabus requirements. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because this inconsistent approach to planning prevents pupils from developing knowledge, skills and understanding systematically and pupils do not achieve the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6. The subject is less secure than at the time of the last inspection.
81. Links with other subjects exist but require further development. For example, in a link with history, pupils in Years 4 and 5 complete a timeline of Bible history and, in a link with English, they compile a questionnaire for a visiting Christian. However, pupils copy some of their work and this practice restricts progress. Furthermore, there are very few displays to motivate pupils or to celebrate their work, which indicates the subject's low profile. Teachers do not assess pupils' work. Consequently, teachers seldom match tasks to pupils' specific needs to enable them to make the best possible progress.
82. Subject leadership is ineffective because there is no monitoring to check that the locally agreed syllabus is followed.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Inspectors observed six lessons covering art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Inspectors also looked at pupils' completed work, talked to pupils about aspects of their work and attended assemblies. However, there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils experience a satisfactory variety of art and design and design and technology projects and are proud of the products that they produce.
- Visiting specialists very effectively promote pupils' learning in music and physical education.
- Teachers' use of assessment is unsatisfactory.
- The monitoring aspect of the co-ordinator's role is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

83. In **art and design**, pupils produce a good range of two- and three-dimensional work, including observational and still-life drawing and painting, landscapes, collage, weaving and clay work. Their projects incorporate the use of various media, including pastels, charcoal, spray paints and fabric paints. Pupils have opportunities to learn about and

produce a satisfactory range of work in the styles of artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Claude Monet and Georges Seurat. In addition, occasional initiatives, such as visiting an art gallery, successfully promote pupils' interest in the subject. These arrangements make a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development. Teachers link art activities effectively to work in other subjects. For example, Year 1 pupils' painting of minibeasts supports their science topic. This adds relevance to their work.

84. Pupils are keen to talk about the range of models that they make in **design and technology**. Their completed work indicates that they do not progressively extend their skills and understanding as they move through the school. This is recognised by the enthusiastic new co-ordinator, who is introducing a new scheme of work to support and improve teaching and learning in the subject.
85. In **music**, pupils have regular opportunities to sing in assembly and hymn practice as well as in music lessons. They have planned opportunities to compose and listen to music, although most pupils have little knowledge of famous composers. During the year, pupils take part in a range of musical activities including a Christmas performance and carols in the local church. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn to play the penny whistle with a visiting music specialist and have opportunities to perform for the rest of the school. Teachers plan occasional music workshops, as when Year 5 and 6 pupils learned to play Djembe drums. These activities very successfully reinforce and extend the skills of those involved. Visiting musicians, such as a brass ensemble, successfully boost pupils' interest in the subject.
86. All elements of the National Curriculum for **physical education** receive regular attention. In the lesson observed, pupils made good progress in developing their games skills because the visiting teacher had very good subject knowledge. As a result, his teaching was clear and authoritative and his very good repertoire of activities kept the pupils interested, active and involved throughout the lesson.
87. There are no consistent arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment in the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects. In lessons seen, all pupils completed the same activities because teachers do not have the necessary information to match tasks closely to pupils' prior attainment. This limits teachers' capacity to challenge and extend individual pupils. Furthermore, in art and design, design and technology and in music, teachers often miss opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of their own learning and how they can improve because they do not regularly evaluate their own and others' work. High expectations, challenging tasks and pupils' good attitudes to work often result in satisfactory overall progress in lessons. However, some pupils, often the more able, do not extend their learning as much as they could because planning for pupils with different abilities is not precise.
88. The subject leaders organise much of the above provision and maintain resources at a satisfactory level. However, they do not have opportunities to observe teaching and to evaluate aspects of pupils' learning at first hand. This limits their capacity to secure consistent practice and to plan for further improvement in their subjects.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is well planned and opportunities are used to develop links with other subjects.
- Visits, visitors and special events add to the quality of this area of the curriculum.

Commentary

89. The school promotes pupils' personal, social and health education very successfully. Pupils have regular, planned opportunities to develop greater self-awareness and confidence by discussing a range of general issues including those they face as part of everyday life. Teachers plan a good range of activities for the timetabled PSHCE lessons or 'circle time'. The development of the School Council also gives pupils an opportunity to act on behalf of others and to represent pupils' views on aspects of school life. Teachers make effective links with other subjects to ensure that pupils develop a healthy lifestyle and learn how to respect the feelings of others and the differences between people.
90. Visits, visitors and special events add significantly to the quality of this area of the curriculum. Pupils' involvement in sport makes a satisfactory contribution to health education and to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils understand the benefits of exercise and healthy lifestyles. They learn about sportsmanship, the need to follow rules, the thrill of victory and how to cope with defeat because teachers give good emphasis to these aspects. The quilting, the 'native American' garden and other environmental improvement projects (see para 11 above) promote personal development very effectively because staff take every opportunity to reinforce pupils' understanding of fundamental values during such projects. They give real relevance to environmental issues and bring pupils 'face to face' with children in other countries. They provide opportunities for pupils to work alongside artists and craftspeople and provide the impetus for them to commit time and effort to meeting the needs of others. Pupils also learn about citizenship through involvement in their community, for example by participating in litter picking, bulb planting and improving the school environment and through their support for local and national charities.
91. The recently appointed PSHCE co-ordinator leads the subject well. This curriculum area has a high profile because she has already conducted a thorough audit of the school's work in this area. She has used the responses from staff to improve planning for the subject so that it includes work on diet, health, sex and relationships education, the misuse of drugs, personal safety and citizenship. However, the pace of improvement is restricted because the school does not allocate the necessary time for the co-ordinator to evaluate and 'fine tune' on-going initiatives.

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 | 3 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 2 |
| Pupils' achievement | 2 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 3 |
| 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 | 5 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 4 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 4 |
| 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 | 4 |
| The governance of the school | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 4 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 |

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

