

INSPECTION REPORT

WALKERGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle upon Tyne

Unique reference number: 108478

Headteacher: Mr D Smith

Lead inspector: Mr M Tones

Dates of inspection: 25th – 27th April 2005

Inspection number: 271430

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	540
School address:	Sutton Street Walkergate Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE6 4SD
Telephone number:	0191 2655737
Fax number:	0191 2650580
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Elizabeth Armstrong
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Walkergate Primary School is a very large community school. It was formed in 2002 as a result of an amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. Consequently this is the first inspection report of the new school. There are 540 children on roll between the ages of four and eleven years old. The school is an area of socio-economic decline and children start school with attainment that is well below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement, is above the national average. The main area of need is for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Currently three pupils have statements of special educational need. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. The school's disadvantaged situation is recognised and it obtains support from being a part of Benfield Education Action Zone and from Excellence in Cities. The school has the Investors in People, Artsmark and Healthy Schools awards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1575	M Tones	Lead inspector	Physical education
11468	J Menes	Lay inspector	
32342	J Cave	Team inspector	English Religious education
30499	T Woods	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography History
32333	G Lilley	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology
32897	C Snee	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music
33070	S Horne	Team inspector	Mathematics Citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus ltd
BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Boughton
Nottinghamshire
NG22 9HQ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet *'Complaining about Ofsted Inspections'*, which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	9
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	13
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Walkergate Primary School is an effective school that provides a good quality of education.

Strong leadership provides a climate for the very good personal development of all its pupils in which good relationships flourish. It is an inclusive school that gives good value for money. Pupils enjoy learning and their achievements are good given their low starting point. Despite this, standards in English, mathematics and science are well below the national average.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are very good;
- Teaching and learning are good and are the main cause of the good achievement;
- There are not enough opportunities to develop writing skills;
- Checks made on pupils' work do not inform them how to improve enough;
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good;
- There are not enough opportunities for children to learn through play in the Foundation Stage;
- There are very good links with parents and the school works very well in its partnership with the community;
- A very strong commitment to inclusion provides good support for pupils who have special educational needs;
- There are many opportunities in the curriculum that enrich learning;
- Other than in English and mathematics, leaders and managers do not play a significant enough part in monitoring and judging effectiveness.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

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

Pupils' achievements are good although standards in tests are well below the national average. Children start school with standards well below average. They make a good start in reception, where teaching and learning are good. However, few are able to make up for the shortfall in standards on entry and most do not reach the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. National test results show that by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in English and mathematics are still well below the national average, and in science below average. Standards are better when compared to schools in similar social contexts and for mathematics were in line and in science, above average. In English, however, standards remain below those of similar schools. A weakness in writing prevents pupils reaching their full potential in tests.

The school sets challenging targets for itself and strives hard to achieve them. The inspection findings show that the overall achievements made by pupils are good given their low starting points. In the work seen for mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design and physical education, standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Standards of work in English are below expectations because pupils do not write well enough. In

religious education, standards are in line with the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. Standards in music are good and in personal, social and health education, very good. Standards in geography, history and design and technology are below those expected nationally. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make good progress in lessons, where they are well supported and set work well matched to their needs. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** This results in very good behaviour and attitudes to work.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers are good at planning lessons and know the subjects they teach well. They, and other adults, foster very good relationships with pupils and are very effective at developing good behaviour. This encourages pupils to show an interest in their work. There is a wide range of ability in many classes and teachers plan well to provide for their different needs. There are very good checks made on pupils' progress in English and mathematics. These are not well developed in other subjects and as a result some teaching is less well matched to the pupils' abilities. Marking of pupils' work is regular and encouraging but often does not let pupils know what they need to do to improve.

Teaching in the reception classes is good overall and teaching assistants are very effective. In Key Stage 1, teaching is good. The best lessons are very well organised and brisk. In these lessons pupils' learning is good because they are encouraged to think for themselves and teachers check that they have understood what is expected. On balance teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, although there is some very good teaching. In the best lessons, activities are changed to maintain a high level of interest and challenge. Where less effective, pupils are asked to listen to the teacher for too long without being active. Here, activities tend to be dull and based too much on worksheets. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs are well included in all areas of learning and achieve well against the targets set for them.

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. It is very much strengthened and enriched by experiences outside normal lessons. Very good provision is made for personal, social and health education and this helps to support learning. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and the more able and talented are well supported. Writing is not used effectively to strengthen learning across the curriculum. There is a very good partnership with parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Very strong leadership is provided by the headteacher and complemented by a very active and committed governing body. The day-to-day management of the school ensures the school runs smoothly and complies with statutory requirements. At all levels, there is a commitment to provide inclusive and positive approaches to learning. This results in the good achievements of most pupils and very good relationships and personal development. Other key members of staff form effective teams and are well focused on raising achievement. However, not all leaders and managers play a significant enough part in monitoring effectiveness and in improving the practice of others.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS

Pupils' and parents' views are very positive. Parents value the strong links between home and school and feel well informed about how well their children are doing.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things that school needs to do to raise the standards of achievement are:

- Raise standards of writing in English and across the curriculum;
- Develop the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders in line with those of English and mathematics and improve their effectiveness in assessing, monitoring and evaluating standards;

- Raise the quality of marking so that pupils are challenged and know how to improve;
- Further develop opportunities for children to learn through play in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Although standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science have been well below national averages for several years, pupils' achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much effort is put into developing very good relationships and as a result pupils are very well behaved and achieve well as a result.
- In English, pupils achieve well in speaking and listening but are not as good as they should be in writing.
- Children in the Foundation Stage and with special educational needs achieve well.
- There are not enough opportunities for children to learn through play in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

1. National test results, over recent years have been well below average in English, mathematics and science. These results are disappointing because standards are higher when pupils are doing activities in lessons and when answering questions than they are in their books. Pupils' achievements are good in those subjects, which place less emphasis on pupils showing what they know and understand in writing. Considerable effort has been made to improve the standards of speaking and listening, which are now good. But, where writing is needed, as in English and science, pupils find it difficult to record what they know effectively. Inspection findings show that pupils are achieving standards that are broadly in line with the national expectations for their age. Taking into account the very low attainment of pupils when they start school, they achieve well, because teaching and learning are good.
2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. This is because their needs are well planned at the right level and they are well supported during lessons. These pupils almost always make significant gains in learning against the targets set out for them in individual education plans. This helps them to gain in confidence and self-esteem and enables them to be fully included in lessons.
3. Standards in geography, history and design and technology are below those expected nationally. In ICT, art and design and physical education standards are in line with those expected nationally. In religious education, standards are in line with the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. Standards in music are good and in personal, social and health education, very good.

Foundation Stage

4. On starting school in reception classes, standards are very low. Teaching and learning are good in reception, meeting the needs of children well. As a result they make significant progress. However, few make up for their low starting point and reach the goals expected of them by the end of the reception year.

Years 1 and 2

5. By the age of seven, standards are below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and have been over the last few years. Teacher assessments of science also indicate that over the same period, standards have been well below average. Most pupils start Year 1 with below average standards. Due to good teaching and learning, pupils' achievements are good and by the end of Year 2, achieve standards in line with those expected of pupils of similar background and attainment.

6. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening. Children enter the school with skills well below average in speaking but the strong emphasis put on developing their skills improves their speaking, listening and vocabulary well. Standards of speaking and listening, however, are still below those expected nationally. Pupils' achievement in reading is satisfactory. The school has concentrated well on the development of reading skills and as a result most pupils improve their reading, reaching standards in line with similar schools. Standards in writing are below those expected. Pupils do not make the progress they should, because there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length.
7. In mathematics, although standards are below national expectations, most pupils make good progress from their very low base on entry to the school.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.1 (14.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.4 (13.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.3 (15.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 73 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Years 3 to 6

8. By the age of eleven, standards remain well below the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Teachers try hard to improve standards from a low starting point. The development of literacy skills is often hampered by insufficient progress in writing, which slows learning in other subjects.
9. Achievement in speaking and listening is good for most pupils, because of the opportunities they are given to develop their thoughts and improve their vocabulary. Pupils' achievement in reading is satisfactory. There is a strong emphasis on reading, supported by good resources. This means there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to read from a variety of sources. The school has stressed the importance of reading and is supported by a range of initiatives, such as Better Reading Partnership and Family Literacy. As a result most pupils read well, with good expression.
10. Pupils' achievements in writing, however, are unsatisfactory because there are too few opportunities for pupils to write more than short pieces of work and for a variety of purposes. Too much use is made of worksheets, which often limits opportunities to write in paragraphs or develop sentence structure. Not enough links are made between reading, speaking and writing. Where this has been used successfully, writing has improved.
11. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good, although standards remain below the national average. Regular checks are made to find out pupils' strengths and weaknesses, which help to target support. As a result, they make satisfactory progress, achieving standards that are in line with similar schools.
12. Achievements in science are good, although standards in the national tests are below the national average. Teachers provide a good focus on practical work and by Year 6 pupils design investigations well, using fair testing, carry out experiments and record their findings. However, too few pupils have the literacy skills necessary to reflect the quality of their understanding or learning in science accurately through their written work.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.3 (24.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.2 (26.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.2 (28.1)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 81 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their standards of behaviour are **very good**. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school tries very hard to improve attendance, which is satisfactory.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well around the school because there are good relationships between all members of the school.
- Pupils show respect for others and high levels of compassion.

COMMENTARY

13. Pupils like their school and take a full part in all that the school offers. They are keen to come to school and feel secure, valued by all and self-assured. They are helpful, considerate and consistently behave well to each other and adults. As a result exclusions are few. Break times and lunchtimes are pleasant and relaxed. They show respect for their school building and are willing to work together in lessons and share ideas. Older pupils have a sense of responsibility for younger ones, helping them on the playground. The school's 'Buddy' system gives good support to all pupils, acting as friends and helpers. Members of the school council said that most children are well behaved and that bullying is very rare in the school. The inspection team supports this view.
14. Staff know pupils well and are happy to talk to them if they have concerns or problems. Parents and carers also have confidence in talking to members of staff about events at home that may impact on their child's well-being at school. The school recognises and values pupils' achievements. Pupils are proud to be chosen as 'star student' because they receive a memorial trophy and their photograph is displayed on the wall. Pupils are generally keen to raise money for charity and many of them visit the local old people's home to entertain the residents at Christmas. The school has good links with the local church at St Oswald's; special services involve the whole school and are well attended by parents and carers.
15. Provision of spiritual and cultural development is very good. Pupils' spirituality is developed through assembly where there is singing and music playing as pupils enter the hall. Effective use of the local church and themed assemblies engage pupils in reflecting seriously on life's fundamental questions. For example, an assembly for the junior classes focused on Jesus' miracles and asked pupils to reflect on the morality in this idea. Spiritual development is planned for within the curriculum. For example, pupils were confident in understanding Christian symbols as representative of faith and belief. The school fulfils the provision of a daily act of collective worship. Similarly, opportunities to promote cultural development are very good. Culture is celebrated through music, art and drama and the school prides itself on providing a wide range of experiences for pupils of different cultures and traditions. Excellent art displays show different cultures and support pupils' understanding. Pupils understand about major religious and cultural festivals, recognising their importance as well as exploring their own culture. This was seen in a history lesson where pupils looked on a local map and discovered local names were of Anglo-Saxon origin.

16. Very good provision for pupils' personal development supports the good relationships throughout the school. The popular breakfast club regularly sees 50 pupils attending and the very good care and support from dinner supervisors and classroom assistants help with the social interaction and build confidence in the pupils. Pastoral care is a particularly strong feature of the school and is monitored carefully to ensure that support is there for pupils. Very good provision is made for pupils whose behaviour needs special attention. For example, the 'time out' and 'Oasis' rooms provide sheltered areas for support. This has impacted positively on behaviour as well as supporting the provision for personal development.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

COMMENTARY

17. Attendance is in line with national average. The school's action to monitor and improve attendance has had a positive impact. The school works hard to ensure that parents and carers understand the importance of good attendance, and together with the education welfare officer follow up unreported absence swiftly. Pupils arrive on time. Parents and carers are aware of the importance the school places on regular attendance and do their best to support the school. The youngest children are settled and leave their parents and carers happily. Pupils want to attend school and enjoy being there.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	534	7	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Information not obtained	0	0	0
Total	540	7	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are good overall. The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. It provides very well for the care of pupils and for their personal, social and health education. It is also strengthened and enriched by experiences and activities which enrich learning. There are **very good** links with parents and the community, which benefit pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is **good** overall. The checks made on pupils' progress and achievements are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- The teachers' planning for lessons is thorough, with clear learning targets and activities for pupils of different abilities.
- Teaching assistants are very well trained and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- In some lessons an over-use of worksheets limits pupils' opportunities for developing their skills in writing.
- There is good use of assessment information in the Foundation Stage, English and mathematics but not in the other subjects.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently give the pupils the guidance they need to improve.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	9 (17%)	20 (37%)	24 (44%)	0	0	0

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

Commentary

18. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and examples of very good and excellent teaching were observed. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage, where children, often with low attainment on entry, show good progress. Teaching is consistently good or better in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6.
19. Assessment is being well used in the reception classes and in English and mathematics. There are very good systems for assessing pupils' knowledge and skills and tracking the progress that they make through school. These practices are not well developed in the other subjects and as a result teaching is less well matched to the pupils' abilities. Whilst the marking of pupils' work is regular and positive it does not help them to reflect upon what they need to do to improve.
20. All teachers ensure that the pupils know exactly what they are learning about at the beginning of each lesson and also what they need to do to be successful. In a good Year 6 lesson on classifying quadrilaterals, the teacher continually returned to the learning targets, so that pupils could assess their own understanding. The teachers make good use of the computer 'smart boards' found in each classroom, to share the targets for learning with the pupils.
21. Teachers and the well-trained teaching assistants form very strong teams and as a result the teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning across the school. This is especially the case for the older children, where the teaching assistants deliver individual support programmes, sometimes on the computer, which are successful in helping pupils to learn.

22. In the best lessons there is a focus on challenging and motivating the children to think for themselves. The pace of the lesson is brisk with exciting tasks that catch the pupils' imaginations. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson looking at inverse operations the teacher created a climate where the pupils were happy to try out their own ideas and share them with their friends. The teacher skilfully taught this difficult concept through a 'giving presents game'. In the same lesson the teacher used another fun activity for the last 10 minutes to check that the pupils had fully understood what they were expected to learn. Relationships between the pupils, the teachers and other adults in the classroom are very strong. The teachers are very skilled in managing the pupils' behaviour in a very positive and consistent way. As a result, the pupils behave well and work hard.
23. The school has formed good links with other schools and organisations to support the development of teaching and learning. All teachers are aware that the pupils have different ways of learning and as a result they use different teaching styles so that the pupils are encouraged to learn in the way that best suits them. In a very good Year 1 lesson on ordering numbers to 20, the teacher used 'positive touch' to create a lovely calm atmosphere, where all the pupils were able to concentrate on their learning. The school policy of 'think, discuss and share' successfully structures the pupils' thinking and results in final ideas that are more considered and reflective.
24. Where lessons were satisfactory rather than good it was because the lesson pace was too slow, pupils sat for too long listening to the teacher without doing anything and the main task was mundane, often worksheet based and not able to challenge the most able pupils. Where pupils were required to sit for too long they became bored and restless and their attention began to wander. The last few minutes of these lessons were not used to sum up learning, assess what pupils had understood, and then the information used to shape the planning for the next lesson.
25. Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school is inclusive and aims for all pupils of all abilities to succeed. The school employs a variety of strategies, which involves in-class support and providing small group sessions. A recent focus on more able and talented pupils is having a positive effect on their learning.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. It provides a wide range of experiences that help to meet the needs and interests of pupils. Provision of enrichment outside the curriculum is very good. Resources are very good. Accommodation is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The emphasis on personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development very well.
- The curriculum has been carefully planned to provide many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.
- Opportunities for learning through play in the Foundation Stage are underdeveloped.
- Opportunities for developing writing both in literacy and across the curriculum are too limited.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for more able pupils is good.
- Resources overall are very good, especially in ICT.

Commentary

26. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are satisfactory overall. All subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education, are provided in the programmes prepared for different year groups. Statutory requirements are met including the need to have an act of daily collective worship for all pupils. Most subjects use the national guidance to plan work but in some subjects this has not yet been adapted to fully meet the needs of all pupils.

27. The very good provision made for personal, social and health education provides a firm basis around which much of the curriculum is built. This works well and results in very good relationships. The personal, social and health education curriculum is present in many aspects of school life and is strengthened through strong links with spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This results in the self-esteem of pupils being raised as their behaviour becomes more mature and many become more aware and tolerant of each other's views and needs. All staff successfully carry out the school's agreed approach to teaching personal, social and health education, resulting in very good relationships between adults and pupils and very good standards of behaviour.
28. The development of speaking and listening skills has been a key focus in many subjects. This has been successful and pupils achieve well through the increased opportunities to think and talk about their experiences. This is helped by the very good opportunities for enrichment. Pupils' motivation for learning is improved by a wide range of resources, including a very good library and good quality reading materials. Teachers provide a wide range of media for pupils to develop their artistic skills and they can choose to play a number of musical instruments. Resources for teaching ICT are very good and help to enhance pupils' learning.
29. There is too much reliance on worksheets across the curriculum. This means that teachers often miss opportunities to develop and extend pupils' writing skills. For example, most writing on display is limited to two sentences or less and many activities only require pupils to give one word or short phrases for answers. Work in books shows that teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils to write at length. The result is that pupils do not build on and improve their skills. This is particularly so for higher attaining pupils. Activities in the Foundation Stage are sometimes too directed by the teacher so that children do not learn independently through play and discovery.
30. There are a good variety of strategies provided to meet pupils' special educational needs, which enables them to make good progress. Pupils' needs are identified carefully and monitored well. Teachers clearly single out the support pupils need in individual education plans and set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers and support staff provide good support in class and where needed teach pupils separately in small groups where they can provide intensive help. New ways of providing better opportunities for more able and talented pupils are proving effective in raising their achievement. Support staff also make a very strong contribution to learning in most classes and are particularly skilled in supporting pupils with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy lessons.
31. The school makes good use of a range of visits and visitors. For example, pupils visit King's Wood and take part in a number of outdoor adventurous activities such as archery, climbing and canoeing. As part of their studies in history they visit Arbeia, the Roman Fort in South Shields, and go to Tynemouth to see the river for themselves. Pupils benefit from activities that make very good use of visiting experts. For example, during the inspection pupils took part in a well-planned and very effective design and technology event. After-school clubs are well attended and staff give generously of their time to make these interesting and enjoyable for all pupils. They provide a wide range of activities that foster pupils' interests in the arts and in sport.
32. There is a good range of teachers to help meet the learning needs of pupils. Support staff make an excellent contribution to raising achievement. The old school buildings are put to good use and provide satisfactory accommodation. Any spare capacity is used well to develop ICT, library skills and creative activities. Learning resources are very good. They are particularly strong in ICT, ensuring pupils' achievements are good. Teachers use computer rooms and the interactive whiteboards regularly in their teaching.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very well for pupils' care, health and safety. Support and guidance of pupils are good overall and there are good opportunities for pupils to express their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships between pupils and all staff support pupils' welfare and progress.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they are very well cared for.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal support and guidance so that they can gain maximum benefit from the education provided.
- Teachers' assessments are not always used effectively to help pupils make progress.

Commentary

33. All staff show concern for the welfare of pupils, and pupils respond by showing care for each other. This is evident in the success of the buddy system which is popular with pupils and parents and is effectively incorporated into the school's provision for behaviour and pastoral support. Systems to promote health and safety and child protection in the school are well established and effective. Pupils with special medical needs are well cared for. The buildings and grounds are regularly checked for hazards and the caretaker is vigilant in effecting repairs and maintaining a high standard of cleanliness. The school works to promote pupils' welfare through the curriculum; for example, the community policeman advised a group on how to keep themselves safe on public transport and when they are out in the streets on their own.
34. Teachers and all staff in the school work together very well to support pupils' personal development. They show a high level of commitment and have a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils through listening to parents and monitoring progress. Those with special educational needs are given good advice and are well supported. There are well-understood arrangements to help pupils cope with problems and overcome personal difficulties so that they can concentrate on their work and achieve more. The school works hard to develop trust between pupils and teachers so that the support it offers is effective. There are good arrangements to help pupils joining the school to settle in quickly. The education welfare officer works hard to support families and ensure pupils' attendance. This helps to prepare all pupils to cope with their new learning environment when they transfer to secondary school.
35. Teachers encourage their pupils to do well and are willing to give them more time if they need extra help. However, teachers' assessments and marking in books are not always clearly focused on challenging pupils and showing them how they can improve their work.
36. Pupils feel that their ideas are listened to and that their views are taken into account. The school council provides a forum for all pupils' views to be heard and their ideas for the development of the school to be considered.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have confidence in the school.
- Very good communication with parents supports pupils' welfare and achievement.
- A very good partnership with local secondary schools supports pupils moving up to the next stage of education.
- Varied links with the community enhance pupils' personal development.

Commentary

37. The school works hard to build a partnership with parents in the education of their children. Parents respond with enthusiasm and are confident that the school is working in the best interest of their children. For example, they are aware of strategies to support good behaviour such as the buddy system and feel that they are effective and worthwhile. Parents are very pleased with all aspects of school life; they feel that they are welcome in school, that the school values their views and keeps them informed. Some parents take the opportunities offered to become involved in school and make an important contribution through fund raising and hearing children read.
38. The school operates an effective 'open door' policy so that parents can speak to a member of staff at the beginning or end of the school day. Parents are kept informed about issues concerning their children and are encouraged to share any concerns with staff so that they can be addressed. Teachers encourage parents to support their children's learning at home. They give guidance on helping with homework and there is effective communication through reading diaries. The school provides opportunities for family learning which are popular and help parents to understand how they can best work with their children and help them to make progress. These classes can also provide a basis for parents to develop their learning further.
39. A wide range of links with the community enables the school to extend pupils' experiences beyond the school gates. It does this through educational visits, environmental projects, participation in musical events in the city and singing to raise money for charity. There are strong links with the church which support religious education and extra-curricular activities. The presence of a police office in the school helps pupils to understand the role of the police in the community, and provides access for parents with concerns about local issues. The community makes use of school building and grounds, for example for sports and councillors' surgeries.
40. The headteacher is chair of the Education Action Zone and the school makes good use of the resources and opportunities this provides. There are two secondary schools in the area and the school works closely with both to extend curricular opportunities for pupils; for example, the sports college provides tuition in badminton and dance. Links are well developed to support pupils transferring to secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher and governance are very good. Management is good. The headteacher and governors provide clear direction and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses very well. Systems of management are efficient.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, staff and governors are very successful in providing an inclusive, secure and positive climate for learning.
- The vision and leadership of the headteacher and senior management team are very good.
- The process of self-review and of monitoring the performance of English and mathematics is very good.
- Very good financial management is helping the school develop its educational priorities.
- Special education needs provision is very well managed.
- Subject leaders' roles do not sufficiently focus on raising standards and improving the practice of others.
- The governing body is very committed to reviewing the work of the school in order to bring about improvements.

Commentary

41. The headteacher, staff and governors are very hard working and fully committed to providing an inclusive, secure and positive climate for learning for all. They have been successful in achieving this aim and pupils enjoy their time in school. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He has established an ethos in the school, which is very influential in the drive to establish, maintain and extend the achievements of the pupils. Parents, staff and pupils value his skills. He is fully committed to providing a very inclusive education and to the development of a learning community. This vision is communicated to staff, partners and parents through personal example. This includes a strong commitment to ensuring the personal development of every pupil, which enables them to have very good relationships and supports their learning. This provides a personal demonstration of support for raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and to the development of effective systems of self-evaluation.
42. The process of self-review and of monitoring the performance of key priorities by key staff, is very good. This has led to some very positive developments to raise achievement. For example, an effective senior leadership team has been established to take responsibility for developing the main priorities of literacy and numeracy. School data is regularly analysed and pupils' performance is closely monitored. Outcomes from analysis identify areas for development and any weaknesses. These become a focus for school development and priorities within the school development plan. For example, weaknesses in pupils' language skills were analysed and resulted in a whole-school approach to the development of speaking and listening. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated well by these key staff. As a result of this very good management, they support the coherent development of learning and teaching across the school.
43. The well-planned staff development programme focuses well on key priorities and improves teacher subject knowledge. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very effective at linking with outside agencies and ensuring that the large number of individual education plans are well focused. These staff form a very effective leadership team, who share the commitment to high quality education. Because of the vision, dedication and drive to share good practice from the leadership, staff operate as an effective and successful team.
44. In other subjects, most leaders are effective in carrying out checks on the curriculum. The headteacher has focused on developing the leadership skills of teachers. Additional time has been allocated to them for development of each subject. This is proving to be the right approach in most subjects. However, this good practice is not developed in all subject areas.

Some subject leaders are not effective at assessing, monitoring and evaluating standards. As a result, weaknesses in provision are not always well enough understood. For example, in science, the pupils' progress has not been monitored sharply enough to give a clear overview of science development across the whole school.

45. The governing body work in close partnership with the headteacher. They share the commitment to raising standards and meet all statutory requirements. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well and are, therefore, able to work effectively towards improvement. As a result, the governors can identify priorities and have put in place a detailed action plan, which reflects their determination to improve standards and the quality of education they provide.
46. There is very good management of both finances and school resources, including personnel. The budget is efficiently linked to priorities in the school development plan and thus the school is able to achieve its priorities successfully. The large balance carried forward from the previous financial year was well planned to provide funds to provide a significant improvement in ICT resources and improved levels of staffing. This has been an effective strategy. For example, the employment of extra support staff is lifting pupils' achievement. Principles of best value are well applied. Additional funding from external sources is channelled effectively into areas of need such as the improvement in ICT and the library.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,326,109.81
Total expenditure	1,352,478.52
Expenditure per pupil	2486.17

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	201,041.87
Balance carried forward to the next year	174,673.16

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children get off to a good start because there are good systems in place to make sure that children settle well in school. Teaching is generally good and so children make good progress in most areas of learning from a starting point that is well below the average level expected for children of this age. This is because they respond very well to the structures that teachers put in place for them that support children's personal and social, language and mathematical development in particular. However, few are set to reach the goals expected. Teachers are now well placed to review provision for the more open-ended play activities that would help to further improve progress across the curriculum and the development of children's creativity and knowledge and understanding of the world. Not enough use is made of the outdoor environment for learning. The leadership and management are committed to further improvements to teaching methods and curriculum provision, including better use of the outdoor environment across all areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have very good relationships with adults.
- There is a very supportive atmosphere in all classrooms.
- Some lessons do not make the best use of activities that allow for learning through play.

Commentary

48. When children first come into the reception classes the standard of their personal, social and emotional development is well below the average. They make good progress and achieve well because of the good teaching and support provided for them so that by the end of the Foundation Stage standards are below the average.
49. Good procedures help children to settle into school well. Teachers plan together to provide a good range of activities in each classroom that encourage co-operation and independence. Children learn how to take turns, share resources and play alongside each other harmoniously. Younger and less experienced children sometimes find it difficult to maintain their self-control when working and playing with others. This is sometimes because of low levels of maturity but also because some lessons are tightly structured and limit opportunities for children to learn through play and discovery. For example, the outdoor environment is not used sufficiently well to support children's personal and social development. However, children have very good relationships with all adults and as a result they respond very well to the gentle reminders about their behaviour given by their teachers and support staff.
50. The very supportive atmosphere in each classroom helps children to improve their confidence. As a result children are happy to leave their carers and take part in the activities planned for them. Despite the very low levels of language development for a significant number of children, most try hard to respond to the teacher's questions when they are part of a class or small group. Good quality role-play areas are provided in each classroom to help children develop their personal and social skills. Children enjoy working in these areas but do not always have sufficient guidance and support from adults to make the best progress they can in improving their ability to play imaginatively with their classmates.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening are promoted very effectively.
- Some activities are too controlled by the teacher.

Commentary

51. Children come into the reception class with very limited communication skills. They make good progress and achieve well but are still well below the nationally expected levels by the end of the Foundation Stage.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers place a great deal of emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. For example, they choose stories that will engage the interests of the children so that they improve their ability to sit quietly and listen. They encourage talk when working with children in small groups and are skilful in developing children's confidence to speak in front of others. Teachers' explanations about familiar stories are good and help children develop early reading and writing skills. For example, children are encouraged to repeat the refrain, "Run, run as fast as you can ..." from the story of *The Gingerbread Man*, while they follow the printed word. Similarly children look at pictures from the story using the interactive whiteboard and are able to tell the teacher what they think the characters might be saying. With help they cut out pictures to put the main events of a story in the correct order.
53. Although their pencil control is generally poor, children respond well to activities that help them practise and improve their ability to form letters correctly. Work in children's books shows that teachers plan activities well and as a result children develop and use their phonic knowledge to write simple words. However, activities are sometimes too directed by the teacher and so children miss opportunities to discover and enjoy writing experiences through play, for example by making better use of role-play areas and the outdoor environment. This hinders the progress that some children make in this aspect of their learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a good range of activities and experiences for the children.
- Some lessons do not focus well enough on learning through play.

Commentary

54. Teaching is good. A range of well-structured activities is provided that help children make good progress and achieve well. Children enjoy number activities and respond well because teaching is lively and enthusiastic. Resources are of good quality and teachers use them well to engage children's interests and support their learning. By the time children leave the reception class they reach standards that are below those expected for their age.
55. Activities are well planned that help the children to improve their recognition of numbers and their counting skills. They improve their ability to write numbers correctly but are sometimes hampered by poor pencil control. Children use pictures well to help them understand the meaning of longer and shorter, tallest and shortest. They learn about shapes and patterns and improve their understanding of money when they play in the Farm Shop.

56. Teachers provide good support but do not always take full advantage of opportunities to plan more open-ended activities where children can learn for themselves through play. For example, the outdoor space is underused and adults do not always play alongside children in role-play activities to ensure that mathematical skills and vocabulary are being fully developed.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in ICT.

Commentary

57. Most children enter the reception classes with limited experiences of the world around them. They have a good understanding of what computers can do and so achieve well in this aspect of their learning.
58. In other elements their achievement is satisfactory. Children make simple observational drawings and paintings of flowers and plants. They work with a range of materials and extend their understanding of words such as rough, smooth and shiny. They use scissors and glue to cut and stick paper. They play with construction toys such as Lego and join the pieces of a simple jigsaw.
59. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. This is because planned activities do not always cover the breadth of experiences that children need to improve in this area of learning. The outdoor area in particular is underused and indoor activities do not always incorporate standard play resources such as sand and water.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Progress and achievement with fine motor skills are good.

Commentary

60. When children first start school their physical development is below the average expected for children of this age. This is because their ability to handle tools such as pencils, scissors and paint brushes is underdeveloped. However, they make good progress with this aspect of their learning and achieve well. This is because teaching is good and a range of activities is planned that help children improve their control. They improve their accuracy when cutting with scissors and handle the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle or construction toy with increasing skill.
61. Children's ability to move with control and co-ordination both in the hall space and on the playground is nearer the average when they first start school. They continue to build on what they can do and become more confident and skilful when climbing and moving along apparatus. The provision for this aspect of children's physical development is limited by a lack of breadth to experiences. For example, the outdoor area is underused and lessons in the hall provide too few opportunities for children to explore movement for themselves.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of musical skills is good.
- Some tasks are over-directed.

Commentary

62. Children enter the reception classes with standards that are well below the average expected for children of this age. They make satisfactory progress and their achievement is sound. By the end of the Foundation Stage standards are still well below those expected. This is because teachers sometime over-direct tasks and do not allow sufficient opportunities for children to learn for themselves using their own ideas. For example, children are give pre-cut shapes to work with and are not expected to make their own decisions about which glue or paint to use for their butterfly.
63. Other activities such as mixing colours when painting flowers and plants allow for a more creative response. As a result children produce a good standard of work. Other activities help them build an understanding of materials, for example when grouping materials according to their texture. They make pictures with pencils and crayons, paint and fabrics. They improve their ability to play a simple musical instrument and tap out a rhythm together well. They enjoy singing a familiar song and join in the actions.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Speaking and listening are good.
- Very good support is provided by expert classroom assistants.
- The subject co-ordinator and other senior staff provide good leadership and management.
- There are insufficient opportunities to write at length and a lack of challenge.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how to progress.

COMMENTARY

64. Achievement in English is satisfactory overall although standards are well below those expected nationally and by similar schools by the end of Year 6. Achievement in speaking and listening is good by the end of Year 6. Children enter the school with skills well below average but the special attention given to the development of speaking supports children in developing their thoughts and sentence structure and improves their vocabulary. Standards in reading and writing are well below the national average but in line with those of similar schools, by the end of Year 2.
65. By the end of both Years 2 and 6, pupils' achievement in reading is satisfactory. Reading is well structured and supported by good resources, such as a well-stocked library and home-school books. This means there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their enjoyment of reading. Reading is further supported by reading targets, which detail for pupils, parents and carers improvements their child needs to make. Rigorous monitoring of reading through the reading record also ensures that improvement is made. Reading has been a whole-school focus for development and is supported by a range of initiatives. Most pupils

read well, with good expression. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils understood the use of punctuation marks and improved their expression.

66. Achievement in writing, however, is unsatisfactory overall. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 develops pupils' early writing skills well, achieving standards in line with similar schools. By the end of Year 6, there have been too few opportunities for pupils to write at length or for a variety of purpose. Most written work is worksheet based and often requires pupils to complete repetitive grammatical work or answer simple comprehension questions. As a consequence, spelling is not consistently accurate. For example, Year 5 work showed little organisation in paragraphs or sentence structure and simple spelling errors were made. Teachers do not always make clear the connections between reading, speaking and writing. Where this is done successfully, teachers show how to improve writing using pupils' own work, and through discussion, reading and thinking demonstrate how they have improved their writing.
67. Overall the quality of teaching is good with some that is very good. Lessons are well structured so that pupils know exactly what they are learning. Planning is thorough and consistent. The curriculum is enriched through a variety of well-planned opportunities to extend pupils' experience in English. Effective music, drama and theatre visits are all part of the enrichment that supports pupils' understanding and develops their use of language. Lower attaining pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, benefit from support from sensitive and very knowledgeable teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to their learning. Some teachers use innovative methods that excite pupils and build up an enthusiasm for the subject. A good example of this was in a Year 1 lesson, where the teacher used games to support children's understanding of blending sounds and letters and linked it explicitly to reading and writing their own fantasy stories. In lessons like these, learning is excellent. Pupils are challenged to develop and extend their writing and consequently achievement is good. On rare occasions where teaching is over-directed, or part of the literacy lesson is too long, a minority of pupils lose interest and become passive. This results in a slow pace to the lesson with pupils not working as productively as they might. For example, a Year 3 lesson on letter writing consisted of cutting and sticking sentences onto a worksheet.
68. Assessment in English is good. The subject leader has thorough records to monitor pupils' progress and achievements and these are used to set their individual targets. Good use is made of data to track progress made by individual pupils. These assessments are supported by very good examples of work on display both in classrooms and around the school, and include targets for improvement. All teachers mark work regularly and they celebrate pupils' achievements. However, marking does not always help pupils understand how they can improve.
69. The leadership and management are good. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated well. Through the careful analysis of recent performance data the school has recognised the need to address some apparent under-achievement in low attaining girls. The team approach to management is supporting the development of learning and teaching across the school. The well-planned staff development programme focuses well on key priorities so that teachers have better subject knowledge.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

70. The school is well aware of the need to make better use of opportunities for language development in other subjects in order to raise standards in English and improve the quality of learning across the curriculum. Several lessons showed the good effects of the school's initiatives to raise standards in reading and in speaking and listening. However, pupils use their writing skills insufficiently in other subjects. The school has not specifically identified how writing skills taught in English can be consolidated in other areas of the curriculum in order to provide opportunities for extended writing that pupils see as relevant activities. Too many opportunities for writing are lost through the over-use of worksheets. In science, mathematics, religious education, geography and history pupils use 'mind maps' to plan and order their

written work. All areas have good literacy displays, and use key words to support pupil learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**. Pupils make good progress and achieve well but standards remain **well below average**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Leadership and management are good, with a clear understanding of where improvements can be made.
- The curriculum is well planned for all pupils.
- Support staff are used well to work with pupils identified as having special educational needs.
- Although standards are well below the national average, pupils make good progress.
- Regular assessments allow the teachers to track the progress of the pupils across school.
- Although the pupils' books are marked regularly, marking often does not give guidance on how the pupils can improve further.
- Numeracy across the curriculum is under-developed.

COMMENTARY

71. The achievement of pupils in mathematics is good overall. Recent results in the national tests show that standards are well below the national average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, due to good teaching, pupils progress well from their very low base on entry to the school and by the end of Year 6 achievement is in line with schools in similar social contexts.
72. Pupils of all ages find remembering number facts difficult. However, many are developing strategies to help their mathematical thinking and to work at speed. Pupils by the end of Year 2 can mentally solve simple number problems, use accurately mathematical terms such as odd and even and identify common flat and solid shapes. The more able pupils are developing an understanding of simple fractions. By Year 6 pupils can solve problems in a number of different ways. They are learning mathematical language well as when in a Year 6 lesson pupils understood the words acute, obtuse and adjacent. During a lesson in Year 4, the pupils achieved well because the teacher was very clear about the next steps in learning for pupils of different ability and gave them a set time in which to complete the work. The school makes very good use of support staff to develop the numeracy skills of those pupils having difficulty, including those pupils identified as having special educational needs. As a result these pupils make good progress against the targets set for them. Teachers regularly assess the pupils' knowledge and skills and track their progress through school. Teachers use the results of regular tests to help them plan the next stage in the pupils' learning.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly for all ability groups with clear learning targets shared with pupils. They use the teaching objectives from the Primary National Strategy as a basis for their thorough planning. Teachers use the computer 'smart boards' well to ensure that the pupils understand not only what they are learning but also what they need to do to be successful. Good questioning techniques reinforce previous learning and help pupils to learn further. In many lessons seen across the school, teachers stretched the pupils' learning by not only asking for answers to problems but also challenging pupils to explain how they worked out their answers. The whole-school policy that allows for pupils to think and then discuss their answers with partners before sharing them with the whole class is very successful in raising the quality of the pupils' answers. Likewise, more able and talented pupils are given additional work to challenge them and encourage them to work quickly. All staff manage behaviour very well and as a result there are very good relationships in lessons, where pupils' ideas are valued and self-esteem is raised.

74. There are a few weaknesses in those lessons that are otherwise satisfactory. Sometimes the pace of teaching is either too slow or too fast and results in pupils becoming restless and less focused on their work. Occasionally all children are given the same task resulting in the less able pupils not being able to do what is asked of them.
75. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. The co-ordinator is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills through observing other teachers, looking at the teachers' planning and analysing pupils' work and tests. There is an action plan that details the activities needed to improve the mathematical experiences that the pupils receive and ultimately to raise standards. Although marking is carried out regularly and is positive, it often does not give pupils ways in which they can improve further.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

76. During the inspection little evidence was observed of mathematics being used in subjects other than mathematics. However, Year 6 pupils experienced an extremely challenging and interesting 'Architecture Workshop' based on bridges. The session extended the pupils' knowledge of flat and solid shapes and in a very practical way helped them to see how mathematics is so important in everyday life. Handling data activities, such as drawing and interpreting graphs, are areas that are not well developed in subjects such as science, geography and history.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good enabling good progress in lessons.
- Pupils are given good opportunities for practical investigations.
- ICT is used well to support teaching and learning.
- Assessment is not well used to improve pupils' learning.

Commentary

77. Pupils' achievements in science are good. Pupils develop a good understanding of science but achievement is often limited by the lack of literacy skills needed to explain and write about their work in science. This holds back their performance in tests. Standards in science throughout the school are below the national average, with too few pupils able to achieve the higher levels in written tests.
78. By the end of Year 2 pupils carry out simple investigations, recording their findings and comparing what happens with their own predictions. This represents good achievement for these pupils. By Year 6, pupils design investigations well, using fair testing, carry out experiments and record their findings. They use prior knowledge to predict the outcomes of investigations with some accuracy and they explain convincingly why the results of their experiments are the way they are.
79. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and planning takes into account the needs of all pupils. At the start of lessons teachers make clear to pupils what they are to learn, often by using a good computer presentation. Teachers plan investigations with practical activities in which pupils can join. As a result pupils learn effectively and develop their skills of investigation. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and use correct scientific terms when they talk to pupils. This effectively encourages pupils to use words such as 'herbivore' and 'carnivore' when they talk about a food chain. Pupils achieve well because teachers are usually effective at providing tasks that match pupils' needs. On occasions teachers are slow to recognise what pupils already know and move them forward. In these

satisfactory lessons teachers sometimes spend too long in preparing pupils for an investigation and too little time on doing it. Those with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants and are guided to tasks which best meet their needs. Some activities lack challenge for the most able pupils. Most pupils enjoy their work in science and behaviour and relationships in lessons are very good.

80. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The subject leader has provided a good scheme of work based on national guidance and resources for this are good. However, pupils' progress has not been monitored sufficiently. The science co-ordinator does not have sufficient knowledge of strengths and weaknesses across the age range to enable further development of the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are very good, providing access to all aspects of the subject with software that is well matched to the pupils' needs.
- Skills and techniques are developed well both in lessons and through separate lessons in the two computer suites.
- The subject co-ordinator has led curriculum and professional development well, improving the skills of the staff.
- There is some very good use of interactive whiteboards, which are available in all teaching areas.
- The school does not use assessment procedures sufficiently well to measure the impact of ICT developments on the attainment of pupils.

Commentary

81. The achievement of pupils is good. From a low starting point, good progress is made so that by the end of Year 2 standards have improved although they are still below those expected. This is maintained so that by the end of Year 6 standards are in line with those expected nationally.
82. By Year 2 most pupils are beginning to develop keyboard skills including mouse control and they regularly use ICT effectively as an integral part of their learning across a wide range of subjects. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are offered a good range of opportunities to use many aspects of ICT through the use of the national exemplar scheme of work. By Year 6, pupils use ICT confidently for a range of activities. They produce colourful and attractive presentations with accurate content. When given the opportunity some pupils evaluate their work critically, making sensible amendments to improve their work.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned with a good range of supporting resources. Interactive whiteboards are now available in all teaching areas and some very good practice is taking place with these, both in support of subject teaching and in the teaching of ICT as a separate subject. In some lessons teachers' lack of subject knowledge limits the effectiveness of the learning activities.
84. Leadership and management are good overall. The subject is managed effectively in terms of the provision and organisation of equipment and training. The subject leader has identified the need to use assessment more precisely to monitor standards and determine what pupils need to do to progress, but it is not used sufficiently precisely at present. The local education authority has provided some professional development for staff and the subject co-ordinator runs regular drop-in sessions with a specific ICT focus.

85. Resources at the school are very good. The computer-pupil ratio is above the national target and all classrooms have interactive whiteboards that enable teachers to demonstrate skills and techniques to whole classes. Teachers have access to a well-planned curriculum based on the national scheme of work with a commercial scheme for support. This enables them to systematically help pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding. There is considerable enrichment to the curriculum with after-school computer clubs and the computer club for girls project. More able and talented pupils have demonstrated exceptional skills in ICT and the school is determined to become a centre of excellence in the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. Pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory but improving. A significant effort has been made to improve the ICT skills of the teachers through a range of professional development activities. In some lessons very good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to enhance subject teaching but there are still some opportunities being missed for using ICT to support learning in subjects. Pupils are more competent in the area of presenting than they are with information handling or sensing and control. Not enough independent use of ICT is taking place in some subjects, such as science, where there is little evidence of its use to present and analyse results.

HUMANITIES

87. Three lessons were observed in history and three in geography. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work including displays but there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about provision in either subject.

History and Geography

88. In the sampling of pupils' work, evidence seen indicates that standards in history and geography are below national expectations. Given their low starting points, this represents good achievement. Pupils' undeveloped skills in writing often limit what they can record on paper about what they know and understand. Both subjects are well planned and the range of work seen in books and on display indicates that there is satisfactory coverage of both subjects. Work in books and on display indicates that the school is giving pupils relevant experiences in these subjects and covering the requirements of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 learn about the past by studying the life of Florence Nightingale. In Year 6 pupils learn about the Victorian schoolroom and make comparisons with their own experiences. Artefacts from around the time of World War 2 are used to help pupils improve their understanding of what it was like to be an evacuee. In geography pupils learn how to identify the similarities and differences between localities. They look at climate, food and housing to make these comparisons.
89. In both subjects teachers' marking is up to date but does not always show pupils how to improve their work. Writing tasks are often limited to answering questions on poor quality worksheets. The best opportunities for practising and improving literacy skills are therefore missed and pupils struggle to show what they know and understand, in writing. Evidence from photographs and displays indicates that pupils' experiences are enriched by a number of well-planned visits. For example, pupils visit Tynemouth when studying rivers. Others go to the fort at Arbeia to enhance their understanding of life in Roman Britain.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- A very well planned curriculum supports pupils' learning.
- Resources are well used effectively to engage pupils.
- Teaching is good and results in pupils achieving well.

COMMENTARY

90. Standards in religious education are satisfactory. By the end of Year 6 pupils achieve well against the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, given their low starting points. Discussions with pupils showed that their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths are good. For example in a Year 4 lesson, pupils discussed why Jews celebrated Passover and the importance of the Seder plate. Resources enhance pupils' knowledge and they are carefully used to support pupils' understanding. For example, a display on Hinduism prompted pupils to discuss confidently the ideas of worship and prayer and were aware of their importance to Hindus.
91. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use resources effectively to help pupils make progress. For example in a Key Stage 2 lesson the teacher used gestures to help children understand the relevance of Christian symbols. In this way, pupils understood the concept of the living Christ. Links to the local church and visits from people of other faiths also support the teaching and learning of religious education throughout the school. Sometimes, the over-use of worksheets means pupils produce little work in writing and so miss opportunities to present their knowledge clearly and reinforce learning.
92. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school makes sure that all parts of the locally agreed syllabus are covered and these relate well to the national schemes of work, ensuring that pupils have enough time learning the subject. However, there is no regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. This results in standards not being high enough at the end of Year 6.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

93. Too few lessons were seen to judge provision in any subject in this curriculum area. Inspectors gathered evidence from these lessons, examined pupils' work in books and on display, and had discussions with staff and pupils.

Art and design

94. In the sampling of art and design, no lessons were observed, so that a judgement on teaching and learning cannot be made. Evidence, however, indicates that standards throughout the school are at least satisfactory and that they make good progress. The display of art makes a significant impact on the quality of the learning environment, from the Rainbow fish of the younger children to the work on bridges and art from other cultures of the older children. There is evidence that the children work in a wide range of media, with examples of collage, photographs, watercolours (sensitively linked with poetry), textiles, pastels, observational sketches (showing good use of shade and texture), papier-mâché and clay work in the form of tiles, mouths, birds and hedgehogs. The pupils have studied and produced work based on famous artists. There was very little evidence, however, of ICT being used to research and enhance the subject.
95. The range of evidence suggests that the leadership and management of art and design are good, with responsibility shared between the creative arts co-ordinator and the art co-ordinator. The school has used its timetable creatively, with an Arts Week in June for Year 6, when all classes collaborate to produce work on an agreed theme. There are good links with a secondary school, where the clay work the children produce is fired and glazed. Visiting artists add expertise, and an architecture workshop by a very skilled visitor gave the children a real insight into the links with shape and space in mathematics. There is not as yet, however, a consistent programme for monitoring and assessment.

Design and technology

96. In the sampling of design and technology only two lessons were observed and very limited evidence of current or past work was available to make comments on standards. An overall judgement, therefore, cannot be made on provision.
97. Examples of work on puppets from a Year 2 class, and on Joseph's coat from a Year 1 class, show some evidence of children working with a range of materials to design and make simple products. In a good lesson observed in Year 4, children used their previous knowledge about levers, hinges and pivots to help them plan a book with moving parts. Displays from Year 6 on slippers and designs for models showed that children are beginning to evaluate their designs. Overall, however, there is little evidence that children are systematically taught designing and making skills which build consistently on previous learning.
98. The recently appointed co-ordinator has made a good start by auditing the resources for the subject, and ensuring each class is properly resourced, but both leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory, as there are no clear plans for developing the subject, no consistent assessment in place, and no procedures for monitoring.

Music

99. In the sampling of music, the work indicates that standards are above those expected. Teachers provide opportunities for the children to listen to, perform and compose music in lessons. The lessons observed in Years 5 and 6 indicate teaching and learning are good, resulting in the good achievements of pupils. Teaching enabled pupils to identify significant features in musical passages well, and the children were encouraged to compose their own pieces of music to illustrate these. They worked very well together in groups, concentrating and producing some very good pieces of work. In a Year 5 class, one of the children showed how they appreciated a piece of music by commenting on how spiritual it was. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher involved all of the children in a body percussion activity while looking at pulse and rhythm, and enabled them to develop their speaking and listening skills through extending their discussion and knowledge of musical vocabulary
100. Management of the subject is good, with a concentration on developing the voice as a musical instrument. The emphasis on performance, with the school presenting three productions at Christmas time, enables the children to develop their self-esteem and confidence in a very creative atmosphere. The Arts Week in Year 6, where children choose between being an artist or a performer, also enables them to develop many skills that would benefit them in other areas of the curriculum, for example, speaking and listening skills, concentration and teamwork. All children are taught through a scheme, which ensures consistency of coverage and progression, and which has useful links with ICT through music and picture clips on CDs.
101. Several visiting music teachers also contribute to the range of instruments being taught, with clarinets, violins and cellos all offered. While the school does have a wide range of musical instruments, there are times, however, when the number of instruments is not enough to enable all children in a class to play. This was the case in a Year 5 lesson, when there were only three keyboards available to the whole class, so that some children missed the opportunity to extend their improvisation skills.
102. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is an assessment scheme in place, although all teachers are not using it consistently to determine standards and inform planning. The co-ordinator for the older children has taught alongside other teachers to share expertise, and her personal enthusiasm and expertise in the subject have a significant impact on the quality of provision for the children. As yet, however, there is no systematic programme of monitoring in place to ensure that both co-ordinators have a clear knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their subject.

Physical education

103. In the sampling of physical education, lessons were seen in games and in dance. In these lessons pupils achieved well due to good teaching. As a result, pupils understand and respect

the rules of play and use their individual skills well, to work as a team. They pass and catch well and control a variety of balls in different game situations. Pupils of all ages are very aware of the effects of exercise on the body, especially after vigorous exercise! A strength in these lessons was the strong focus on developing skills. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, a good variety of techniques were developed when throwing a catching. This provided considerable challenge for some less able pupils but through demonstrations and practice they learned to throw over-arm effectively.

104. Lessons are very well planned to provide a variety of opportunities for all to get actively involved. They are well balanced and interesting with time for pupils to listen, watch, practise individual skills and then perform together. Because pupils are constantly encouraged to perform well, they respond with energy and try very hard to succeed. As a result they learn quickly.
105. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator whose skills have been well developed through her participation in a sports co-ordinator programme in the area. A recently introduced scheme provides a good and well-balanced range of activities. There are good plans for the development and further improvement of physical education. Physical activity is encouraged well through the many opportunities for pupils to join in sports activities outside lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

106. The school attaches great importance to personal, social and health education and provision is very good. It delivers a very active programme through specialist lessons, assemblies and as part of other subjects such as religious education and physical education. In addition, there are special events such as Anti-Bullying Week and Child Safety Week. Each year group has learning targets that teachers are expected to deliver to the pupils. The co-ordinators provide support and advice but do not formally monitor how well personal, social and health education is taught. The school has received the Healthy School Award which requires that many aspects of personal, social and health education are taught and also acknowledges the quality of the school's provision. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to share their opinions freely while respecting the views of others. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and citizenship. An elected school council meets regularly with teaching staff to discuss pupils' ideas and issues. Pupils make decisions about improvements that are needed in school and they learn to play an active role as citizens. In the playground, trained pupil 'Buddies' look out for children that are unhappy and a classroom is provided for those pupils that sometimes find lunchtimes a difficult part of the school day. Personal, social and health education is very well co-ordinated. The joint co-ordinators understand its importance to pupils and they have been very successful in implementing a number of initiatives in school such as 'The Fruit Smoothies and Salad Bar' to help the pupils to eat a more healthy diet.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

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