

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHOPWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chopwell, Gateshead

LEA area: Gateshead

Unique reference number: 131107

Headteacher: Mrs B Fellowes-Pryne

Lead inspector: Mr A Margerison

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 255793

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 305

School address: Derwent Street  
Chopwell  
Gateshead  
Tyne and Wear  
Postcode: NE17 7HS

Telephone number: 01207 561322  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mr P Ward  
governors:

Date of previous June 1998  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the centre of the village of Chopwell. Until the mid-1960s it was a mining community and the village reflects its heritage being a mixture of private, mainly terraced, and Local Authority owned housing. Most of the pupils live in the immediate area; however, it is a popular school and a few pupils are brought to the school by their parents from the surrounding area. Although pupils' backgrounds vary, the area is one of significant social and economic deprivation and overall their socio-economic circumstances are low. There are 305 pupils on roll aged between three and 11 years including 35 children who attend the nursery part-time. When children start school, their attainment varies from year to year, but overall it is well below that which is typical for their age. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, mainly for general learning difficulties, is broadly average, although there are a small, but significant number of pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is one pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Need. The vast majority of pupils are of White-British origin with a very small number of pupils of mixed white-Asian and mixed-black ethnic backgrounds. Few pupils have English as an additional language. Overall, the number of pupils who join and leave the school during the school year is above average. In recent years the school has had significant problems with staff absence due to illness and most of the staff,

including the headteacher and senior staff have been appointed in the last three years. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the School Achievement Award in 2001 and the Healthy Schools award in 2003 and 2004. The school has a Neighbourhood Nursery on-site and significant building works are being undertaken to provide a sports and arts complex to extend its role as a community resource. The school is preparing a bid for the First International School Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2166 6	Mr A Margerison	Lead inspector	English
			Geography
			History
			Special educational needs
			English as an additional language
9572	Mrs K Anderson	Lay inspector	
1263 1	Mrs M McLean	Team inspector	Science
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Religious education
			Foundation Stage
3102 2	Mr P Hardwick	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Information and communication technology
			Music
			Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Chopwell Primary School is a fairly effective school** that provides satisfactory value for money. It is well led by the headteacher who is well supported in her vision for the school by senior staff and governors. As a result of the initiatives they have introduced and the new staff brought into the school improvement team, the quality of education and standards are beginning to improve.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision in the nursery and reception is very good.
- Pupils develop good attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Not all teachers in Years 3 to 6 consistently plan well enough for the range of abilities in classes.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to use and develop their speaking, mathematical and investigative skills in lessons.
- The school is an important part of and makes very good use of the local community in its activities.
- Pupils are very well cared for based on very good relationships between adults and pupils.
- The accommodation is excellent.
- There is no whole-school overview of the curriculum to map how pupils' literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and other subject skills and knowledge are developed through the new topic approach.

Since the last inspection the school has improved satisfactorily. Provision in ICT has improved well. Planning systems have been improved so that in most classes, what pupils will learn is clearly identified. However, there are still shortcomings in Years 3 to 6 on how the practical aspects of mathematics and science, particularly to enable higher attaining pupils to reach their full potential, are planned and taught.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	E	C	A
mathematics	A	E	C	B
science	B	E	C	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

From a well below expected starting point when children join the nursery **pupils achieve satisfactorily** as they move through the school. In nursery and reception, children achieve very well to reach the goals they are expected to reach in their personal and social development and physical development. In communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical, creative and their knowledge and understanding of the world, standards are below those expected, but from a very low starting point they achieve well. In the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, the school's results in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average. Although current standards in Year 2 are below average, inspection evidence shows that they are better than in 2003 and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory although standards in the current Year 6 are below

average in English and mathematics. However, this purely reflects variation in cohorts and does not signify declining standards on 2003. Pupils with special educational needs in this group are achieving well, but few are attaining the expected standards for their age. Standards are in line with those expected in science and religious education. Pupils are achieving well to attain the expected levels in ICT by Year 6. Due to timetable arrangements during the inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements in any other subjects.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well. Attendance is below average, and punctuality is unsatisfactory mainly because a few parents do not ensure their children attend school regularly enough or on time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.** Teaching in the nursery and reception is good so children achieve well. A significant strength of the teaching in these classes is the very strong teamwork between staff and the very important contribution teaching assistants make to children's learning. Throughout the school teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, use resources well and lessons are brisk. In Years 1 and 2 teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well with a high priority on developing pupils' basic reading, writing and numeracy skills. However, in Years 3 to 6 not all teachers plan effectively for the full range of abilities in the class. This particularly affects the rate at which pupils learn to conduct investigations in science and the achievement of higher attaining pupils in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. In addition, there are not enough planned opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills through drama and role-play. Assessment procedures are thorough and the information is used well by teachers in Years 3 to 6 to establish and review learning targets with pupils.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The school has adopted an innovative approach to teaching art and design, history, geography, and design and technology. However, as yet, there is no whole-school overview of these topics to effectively track the development of pupils' skills and knowledge or to identify opportunities to link in pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The school places a very high priority on ensuring that pupils are very well cared for and work in a safe and secure environment. As a result of very good relationships between pupils and adults, pupils feel very confident that if they have concern they will be listened to. Links with parents are good and very good with the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The school is well led and managed.** Since the disappointing Year 6 results in the 2002 national tests, governors and the headteacher have established effective monitoring procedures and brought new staff into the school improvement team to support the headteacher in her drive to improve the quality of education provided for pupils. As a result, the school has clear direction focused on raising standards. Senior staff are good role models for other teachers through their leadership of their own subjects. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils have positive views of the school. Parents are particularly impressed with the high expectations teachers have of their children and how they encourage the children to



develop and mature. However, they have concerns about the behaviour of pupils, how well parents are involved in the school and the information they get on their children's progress. Inspection evidence shows that the vast majority of pupils behave well, but there are few pupils who do cause problems for teachers in lessons. The information parents are provided with is adequate, but there are no systematic procedures to involve parents in the work of the school. Pupils enjoy school and the good range of activities outside of normal lessons.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that all teachers in Years 3 to 6 consistently plan activities to cater for the full range of abilities in classes.
- Provide more planned opportunities for pupils to use and develop their speaking, mathematical and investigative skills in lessons.
- Devise a whole-school overview of the curriculum to map how pupils' literacy, numeracy, ICT and other subject skills and knowledge are developed through the new topic approach.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

From a well below expected starting point when they begin in nursery, pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. Standards in English and mathematics are below average in Years 2 and 6.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well in nursery and reception. They achieve very well in their personal and social development and physical development.
- Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 do not achieve as well as they could in mathematics and science because there are insufficient activities in lessons for pupils to use and apply their basic skills to solving problems and conducting investigations.
- Standards in speaking and writing are below those expected in Year 6.
- Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well.
- Pupils achieve well to attain the expected standards in ICT.

#### **Commentary**

1 The school's results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated in recent years from well below the national figures to well above them. One's year's low results are often followed by much better ones the following year. In 2002 for example, pupils in Year 6 did poorly in English, mathematics and science and the school's results were well below the national average, whereas the following year's Year 6 pupils who took the test in 2003 did very much better. The school's results on this occasion were similar to the national figures and very much better than those of similar schools. These variations are largely, but not exclusively, a natural outcome of the make up of the different year groups. For example, the Year 2 pupils who took the tests in reading, writing and mathematics in 2003 had among them a high proportion of pupils who had special educational needs; this is not the case in 2004 and, although the test results have yet to be confirmed, early indications are that the results are better than last year's. More pupils have exceeded the levels expected for their age, particularly in reading and mathematics.

2 Other factors have affected the results of the Year 6 pupils and proved to be barriers to the school achieving consistently high results. The school experiences quite a high turnover of pupils and its records show that pupils who were likely to have done well in the tests and boosted the school's overall results have tended to be the ones who have left. In addition, the school has experienced unwelcome turbulence in its teaching force and this has, as parents have rightly observed, had a detrimental effect on the progress of some classes and, ultimately, on the standards they have achieved. It is to the credit of the school that, although the trend in results in Year 2 is below the national pattern, given the difficulties it has had to contend with, the pattern in Year 6 is broadly in line with the national trend. Currently, this picture is much brighter and a much more settled pattern of better quality teaching has been established leading to improving standards lower down the school. For example, in Year 4 standards are in line with those expected in English and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.3 (15.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.4 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.7 (16.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (24.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.8 (23.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.6 (27.0)	28.6 (28.3)

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

3 Children start in the nursery with skills in all aspects of their development that are well below those that are typical for their age. Very few have extensive experience of education before they start at school and a significant proportion have very weak language and communication skills. As a result of effective teaching, characterised by very good teamwork between the teachers and teaching assistants, overall, children achieve well as they move through the nursery and reception classes. They achieve very well in personal and social development so that the majority of children attain the expected standards in this area of learning by the end of reception. However, despite good teaching that focuses very clearly on developing basic reading, language and mathematical skills, by the end of reception, the initial deficiencies in speaking and listening continue to have an impact on their learning. As a result, a significant proportion of children do not attain the expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative development or in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In physical development, children achieve very well to attain the expected standards. This reflects the very good resources and outside accommodation that give children a very broad range of opportunities to practise and develop their skills.

4 In an effort to improve standards in Year 2, the headteacher and governors reacted proactively including appointing an experienced teacher in January of this year to teach in Year 2. This has proved to be effective and teaching in Year 2 is good. As a result, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. Standards in ICT are below that expected, although pupils are achieving satisfactorily.

5 The school's targets for the current year are lower than last year, but are realistic when the cohort is looked at in more detail. Inspection evidence shows that standards overall in Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics. However, there are specific factors that directly affect this year group. Although the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average, fewer than half of the pupils attained the expected levels in reading and writing in the Year 2 national tests and very few attained the higher than expected levels. Standards in mathematics were also below average. In addition, these pupils have suffered significant disruption to their learning as a result of teachers' absence. Analysis of assessment data of those pupils who were at the school in Year 2 shows that overall, pupils have achieved satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. Those pupils with special educational needs have achieved well relative to their starting point, but few are expected to attain the expected levels for their age. Inspection evidence also shows that standards are improving lower down the school with most pupils in Year 4 attaining the expected standards for their age in English and mathematics.

6 In English, the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs is reflected in the standards of reading and listening which are in line with those expected, but they are not as good in speaking or writing. In speaking, although higher attaining pupils are articulate and expressive, many pupils lack real confidence and need considerable prompting to express fully their ideas and feelings. This is then reflected in their writing. The school has placed considerable emphasis on developing pupils' writing and the positive effect of this shows in

that most pupils are good at describing events and writing pieces of work with a clear sequence and structure. However, few use vibrant or expressive language in their work to describe settings or how characters are feeling. In addition, the quality of handwriting is very variable from subject to subject and adversely affects their presentation. Similarly, in mathematics, although pupils develop secure numeracy skills their ability, particularly the higher attaining pupils, to apply these skills to solve problems is less effective. In science, pupils are achieving satisfactorily to a reach average standards. They have a secure understanding and knowledge of the different strands of the subject, but their ability to design and conduct investigations is underdeveloped. Pupils' standards and achievement in religious education are satisfactory, but they are achieving well in ICT to reach standards that are in line with those expected. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards or achievement in any other subjects.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very interested in school life and the range of activities provided for them.
- The school has very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and works very hard to promote pupils' understanding of right and wrong.
- Children in nursery and reception achieve very well in their personal and social development.
- A small, but significant group of parents do not ensure their children attend school regularly enough or arrive on time in the morning.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of their own culture, but there are fewer opportunities for pupils to learn about the daily lives of other cultures who live in Britain.

### **Commentary**

7 From discussions with pupils, the pupils' questionnaire and according to parents, the vast majority of pupils are keen to attend school and most are punctual, although there are a few pupils whose parents do not ensure they consistently arrive on time in the morning. The school has established good procedures to promote and encourage pupils to attend school. For example, there are clear reward systems, certificates for good attendance and the school follows up any pupils who do not arrive at school soon after the start of the school day. However, despite this work and that of the Local Education Authority officers, they have had little impact on a few parents who do not ensure their children attend school regularly enough, so, as a result, overall attendance remains below the national average.

### **Attendance**

#### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93.9%)***

Authorised absence	
School data	6.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll
White – British	296
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7
Mixed – White and Asian	1
Mixed – any other mixed background	1

8 A significant proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire were concerned about standards of behaviour. However, the number of returned questionnaires was very low and the inspection evidence shows that, apart from a very few pupils whose behaviour is at times inappropriate, the vast majority of pupils behave well in and around the school. This reflects the strong emphasis the school places on ensuring they develop a very clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils responses to the pupils' questionnaire confirm this view with only a very few strongly disagreeing. The school has very high expectations of behaviour and promotes good relationships between pupils effectively. As a result, most pupils feel that other pupils behave well and that most are friendly towards each other. Pupils are involved in discussing school and classroom rules and the importance of respecting each person as an individual with their own views and attributes is consistently reinforced in assemblies and class discussions. The effective use by teachers of the closing sessions of many lessons to celebrate what pupils of all abilities have done is a good example of this. As a result, those pupils consulted about standards and behaviour, including the school council, expressed no concerns about behaviour or bullying. This is also reflected in the fact that there have been no exclusions in the last year and the good relationships seen during the inspection in classes and around school. To a large extent the good standard of behaviour is directly due to the clarity with which most teaching staff consistently make their expectations very clear and their effective pupil management rather than the pupils being intrinsically well behaved. For example, in several classes there are a few pupils who find it difficult to behave appropriately and on occasions they do disrupt the learning of others. However, they are a small minority and, in the main, have been identified as having special educational needs for emotional and behavioural difficulties.

9 The school places a high priority on establishing a community identity among pupils. For example, a whole school citizenship target is set on a termly basis and classes are awarded points according to their achievement in this area. These are announced at the whole school assembly and the best class awarded with a small trophy for the week. A house system has also been set up with weekly house point charts in every class, to encourage team work and a sense of corporate identity. As a result, the vast majority of pupils are very interested in school and enthusiastically join in with the activities provided for them. They willingly take up any responsibilities that are offered to them such as acting as buddies in the playground at lunchtime. All Year 6 pupils have a role to fulfil in the school; for example, pupils have responsibility for ringing the bell at the end of lunchtime and looking after the library. The promotion of positive attitudes begins in the nursery and reception class where staff are very good role models for the children. As a result, they achieve very well in their personal and social development. In Years 1 to 4, these good attitudes to learning and to each other are evident, but a few of the oldest pupils do not have the same keen interest in lessons and need prompting to maintain their involvement in lessons and to work to the best of their ability. In part this reflects the disrupted teaching these pupils have had in recent years and a succession of temporary teachers. Quite understandably, a few parents are concerned about the impact

this has had on their children, but now that staffing has largely stabilised, pupils in all classes are achieving at least satisfactorily.

10 In assemblies and in other lessons, such as personal, social and health education sessions, pupils are given appropriate opportunities to reflect upon their work and to consider the feelings and values of other people. Pupils learn to respect and reflect on the achievements of others. For example, each Friday there is an achievement assembly that is regularly attended by parents in which different classes and individuals present to the rest of the school what they have been doing. In subjects such as English and history, pupils have opportunities to reflect on how people's lives are affected by the events that happen to them such as being evacuated during the war, but the range of planned activities in lessons to promote pupils' spiritual development by giving them opportunities to reflect upon their own or others feelings and emotions is inconsistent. The school develops pupils' appreciation of different cultures as well as their own cultural traditions effectively. For example, visits are made to the Roman Wall and other local museums. In addition, pupils' appreciation of the creative and performance arts is promoted well. A good range of visitors to school regularly provide a range of music and drama workshops. Currently a professional artist is working with children across the school to produce a large ceramic mosaic for the exterior of the new sports hall. Pupils learn good respect for all people and they learn about different faiths and beliefs through religious education lessons. However, there are few other opportunities for them to learn about the daily lifestyles of people from the broad range of different cultures who live in this country. As a result, they are not fully prepared for living in an integrated culturally diverse society.



## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched very well and the accommodation is excellent. Pupils are very well cared for. The school has established good links with parents and very good links with the community.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Assessment procedures are good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in the nursery and reception have very good subject knowledge and work very closely with teaching assistants.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers use resources and time effectively to interest and involve pupils in lessons.
- Teachers in all classes in Years 3 to 6 do not consistently plan enough variation in lessons to accommodate the full range of abilities in the class.
- Assessment procedures are thorough and in Years 3 to 6 pupils are involved well in evaluating their own learning.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7 (16%)	16 (37%)	17 (40%)	3 (7%)	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.*

11 The pattern of teaching and learning is broadly similar to that seen at the last inspection with the consistently better teaching being in the nursery and reception classes. Most pupils feel that lessons are fun and they learn new things in lessons, but the response of younger pupils was particularly positive in this aspect of school. Teaching in the nursery and the reception class is good and is based upon effective planning and very strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, the children are provided with very good adult role models. Staff provide children with a very broad and extensive range of interesting and challenging activities both indoors and outside and make sure all participate. All play activities have a clear learning objective which is intended to develop children's imagination and encourage them to work and play with each other. As a result, all children, including those with special educational needs and the very few whose first language is not English, effectively develop their personal, language and basic number skills. The pace of lessons is good so children learn to concentrate well and there are few occasions when children are 'off-task'. Teachers and teaching assistants also have very high expectations of children's behaviour and give very clear and explicit instructions at the start of sessions. As a result, the youngest children very quickly learn the routines of the school when they first arrive and are well prepared to move into Year 1.

12 Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall, but is inconsistent across the classes where it varies from very good to unsatisfactory. However, there are consistent strengths. Teachers begin the vast majority of lessons by sharing with pupils the objectives of the lesson

and what they will be learning about. In addition, ICT and other resources are used well to interest and motivate pupils. In most cases, this successfully engages pupils in the lesson and ensures that sessions get off to a positive, brisk start. In most lessons, this is effectively maintained. Teachers also use teaching assistants well in lessons to work with individuals and groups which makes a significant contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. However, they do not work exclusively with these pupils and, in several classes, teachers apply a flexible approach to their deployment. A particularly successful approach is used in one of the Year 5 and 6 classes where the teacher has evolved a very effective system which involves pupils in evaluating their own competency. Rather than assuming that pupils with special educational needs will require extra help, she asks them to decide if they are confident with the task or feel as if they need help. These pupils work with the support assistant in a small group and benefit from her well-informed and specific help. Teachers also have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. However, partly due to the lack of detailed strategies in pupils' individual plans, their methods are not always totally successful. This mainly applies to the few pupils who have identified emotional and behavioural difficulties and the very few older pupils who do not have the same level of dedication to their studies as the vast majority of pupils.

13 There is another factor that sharply differentiates the very good lessons from those that are less effective and contributes to the behaviour of a small minority of pupils. This relates to the planning of some lessons and was a concern at the last inspection where it related particularly to higher attaining pupils. In the best lessons, teachers use questions very effectively to challenge and engage pupils of all abilities in the lesson, use a broad range of experiences including role play activities and ensure that group activities are very well matched to the range of ages and abilities in classes. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 English lesson, pupils had been writing play scripts based on the book they were studying, but each had been asked to prepare a different part of the story, two groups with additional adult support. The closing session gave all pupils an opportunity to act out their scripts. This session not only reinforced pupils' understanding of the book and their basic literacy skills, but also extended their speaking and ensured that not only were pupils of all abilities able to work at their own level, but also to experience success and the acclaim of their classmates. As a result, behaviour and pupils' attitudes were very good and a positive learning experience for all. In contrast, not all teachers acknowledge in their planning the need to provide a variety of activities in lessons to match the spread of abilities in the class, even when pupils are grouped by ability such as in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. For example, in a lesson for lower attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6, there was no distinct variation of activities so the tasks in both the whole class and group parts of the lesson were not well matched to reflect the broad spectrum of abilities in the class which included several pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, the pace of the lesson slowed, it was punctuated by examples of inappropriate behaviour because pupils were unable to complete the tasks which disrupted the learning of other pupils and some pupils made very limited progress. Examples of lessons with similar weaknesses were seen in Year 3.

14 Although the school has addressed the weaknesses in teaching identified in the last inspection satisfactorily, particularly the elements that related to teachers' ICT skills, not all aspects have been fully dealt with. For example, teachers with access to good levels of ICT resources in their classroom such as data projectors use them well in lessons to illustrate texts and to display the objectives of lessons. Teachers also use the ICT suite well to teach pupils the basic skills of the subject. However, there are still insufficient opportunities for pupils, particularly the oldest pupils, to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems and to develop their investigative skills in science. The latter is improving now that the influence of

the new science subject leader has begun to improve the quality of teaching. In contrast, there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic literacy skills and most teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to read and write in other subjects, although not all teachers have high enough expectations of pupils' presentation so standards of handwriting are variable across classes and subjects. However, there are not enough systematically planned opportunities in lessons for pupils' to practise and use their spoken English through drama and other role-play activities to help pupils develop a thorough understanding of the characters or the events that they are learning about.

15 Since the last inspection, the school has introduced thorough procedures to assess and track the progress pupils are making. These procedures are effective in English, mathematics and science and they are supported well by regular testing and assessment tasks in lessons. The teachers in charge of these subjects use this information well to evaluate standards in their subjects and the overall progress different pupils and year groups are making and to identify areas for improvement. Staff in the nursery and reception know each child well through very detailed assessments so they address individual needs in their plans. Assessments of how children have got on in lessons on a daily basis provide teachers and teaching assistants with a clear picture of each child and how they are progressing. This enables teachers to plan activities that build progressively on children's skills. In Years 3 to 6 the school gathers a wealth of information on pupils' progress and most teachers use this information appropriately to ensure that activities match pupils' abilities. Procedures to involve pupils in assessing how well they are doing are effective and well established, particularly in English and mathematics. In addition, weekly learning targets are set in literacy, numeracy and science and so teachers also get a clear view of how the pupils feel about their progress. The views of pupils support this judgement with the majority of pupils feeling that teachers show them how to improve their work, but if they are stuck they will be helped to solve the problem.

### **The curriculum**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school premises are of an exceptionally high standard in terms of space and facilities and are very well maintained by the caretaking staff.
- The curriculum in the nursery and reception is very good and promotes pupils' learning in all the areas of learning well.
- The school has recently introduced an innovative approach to planning the curriculum, but as yet there is no whole-school overview of the curriculum to ensure that all the required aspects of the subjects involved are studied to ensure systematic coverage of the National Curriculum and to identify opportunities to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
- Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good.
- Provision for pupils' personal, health and social education is good.
- The provision for the few pupils with behavioural difficulties lacks systematic strategies to meet their individual needs.

### **Commentary**

16 The accommodation and the resources available for pupils are excellent. The current building that opened in 1998 gave the school a very high specification to start with but, since the last inspection, it has been further improved by providing more outside activities for

children in the nursery and reception and developing the resources for ICT. In this aspect, improvement since the last inspection has been good. Although it is built on a hillside, access for people with disabilities is very good with ramps outside and an internal lift to give access to the lower floor. Further improvements are currently being built including a covered area for children to play and work outside in all weathers and a sports and art centre. The latter is being funded by a national initiative and will ultimately house community facilities such as health care and social services. The whole site is very well maintained by the caretaking staff so it has retained its original 'gloss' which helps pupils respect and look after their school. In addition, teachers use displays very well to celebrate pupils' achievements and work so it is a bright and stimulating place for people to work and learn.

17 Children in the nursery and reception classes get a very good start to their education. This is primarily due to teachers' very effective interpretation of the national guidance for the Foundation Stage as the basis for their planning of lessons. As a result, children are provided with an extensive range of interesting and challenging activities both indoors and outside and staff make sure all participate. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 has developed well since the last inspection and provides pupils with an adequate range of activities to develop their skills across all subjects of the National Curriculum, including ICT (that was identified as weakness at the last inspection), and religious education.

18 The school has made an innovative and potentially highly effective response to recent national guidance on how the curriculum can be organised and taught. The school has recently begun to pilot a topic-based approach to teach aspects of history, geography, art and design, and design and technology. Each phase of the school, nursery and reception, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6, study a different country in depth and learn about the culture, the geography and traditions of these countries. This approach also reflects the school's commitment to developing an international flavour to its work, part of which is the links it is developing with schools abroad. The displays of pupils' work from these topics are of a high standard and show that through these activities pupils have good opportunities to practise and use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, although the opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other subjects outside of these topics are more limited. This project is in its early stages of development and as yet there is no whole-school overview of the curriculum to ensure that all the required aspects of the subjects involved are studied and that pupils' skill, knowledge and understanding develops progressively.

19 Overall, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, but the main strength in the provision is that for pupils with general learning difficulties. These pupils form the majority of those pupils identified as needing additional support. Their individual plans are good and identify clear targets for improvement. Pupils' work and individual pupil sessions show that teachers use these plans well as the basis for aspects of lessons. However, the individual plans for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties do not have same detail or clarity in the suggested teaching approaches to address their difficulties. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants tend to react to pupils' behaviour rather than having a pre-planned strategy to try and pre-empt the behaviour which, on occasions, results in the pace of lessons slowing and the learning of other pupils being affected.

20 The provision for personal, social and health education is good. A whole-school scheme has recently been introduced that complements and gives a coherent structure to existing systems to recognise pupils' achievements and to promote their understanding of issues such as drugs, sex and health education. Visits to school from external specialists and agencies such as the local community police, the fire service and health care professionals are an important part of the provision throughout the school from nursery through to Year 6.

Although, there are no systematic procedures to evaluate the impact of the provision on pupils' personal development, the quality of the school's work in this area was recognised in 2003 and again in 2004 with the awarding of the Healthy Schools award.

21 The school provides a very good range of extra curricular activities, academic, creative and social events including discos, quiz nights and video nights. In a number of cases, funds raised may go to a chosen charity or go to buy extra resources for the school. After school sports clubs are provided by school staff, but they are supplemented well by buying in specialist outside coaches in sports such as such as basketball and judo. However, the school also provides good opportunities for pupils whose aptitudes lie in the creative and performance arts. For example, 'The Way Out' Theatre Company worked with pupils to create an interactive production of "The Christmas Carol". Peripatetic music teachers and the school band extend the musically more able pupils, while an Enterprise project artist works with artistically talented children on a weekly basis. A drama club extends more able speakers leading to participation in a local festival. Links with a local Beacon School have lead to involvement in a 'Master Maths' project for mathematically more able pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The procedures to ensure that pupils work in a safe environment are very effective.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are very good.
- Procedures to settle children into the nursery work very well.
- The school is developing good arrangements to involve pupils in the work of the school.

### **Commentary**

22 Among parents, the very high standard of care and concern for pupils' welfare is seen as a significant strength of the school. Most parents feel that the school develops the 'whole person' well, based on very good relationships between adults and pupils and, in the nursery and reception, staff quickly get to know children. Inspection evidence supports their view. The school has established very comprehensive procedures to ensure pupils' safety and welfare, including risk assessment. All staff know and understand the procedures for child protection.

23 The procedures in the nursery to encourage children to settle into school are very good. The school holds meetings for parents before their children start in reception while home visits take place for new nursery pupils to establish early links. Parents are also welcome every morning to spend time with their children in school. In addition, information booklets have been written to help parents become familiar with school routines and to help them understand how they can help their children at home. As a result, children settle very quickly into school routines and become part of the school. They attend assemblies and take part in all aspects of the school's work from the very start.

24 Pupils' views support this judgement. In response to the questionnaire, and in discussions with inspectors pupils were very positive about the way the school supports them with their work and, with very few exceptions, pupils feel that teachers listen and respond positively to their ideas. To give a more formal structure to this aspect of its work, the school

has recently established a school council. Although, it is in its early stages of development, the procedures to elect representatives are democratic which supports pupils' appreciation of their role as a 'citizen' of the school community well. It is currently involved in discussion about the outside environment and other improvements around school.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has established good links with parents. Links with the community are very good. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The information provided for parents about the work of the school is very good.
- The school is developing as a very important centre for the local community and involves local people very well its daily activities.
- The school has developed good links with schools in other countries.
- There are no formal systems to involve parents directly in the development of the school.
- There are no formal curricular links with other schools.

### **Commentary**

25 The school provides parents with a wealth of information about the work of the school in the form of letters, newsletters and meetings for parents. Despite this, a significant proportion of parents who completed the questionnaire, although they felt comfortable about approaching the school, did not feel they were adequately informed about their children's progress. However, only a small percentage of parents completed a questionnaire and inspection evidence shows that the information they get is of a high standard and very easy to read. This judgement was endorsed at the meeting for parents held prior to the inspection. Parents spoke highly of the academic performance reports, which they feel are specific to their child and give a clear picture of progress, They also receive termly progress reports. However, the school does not have regular, formal systems to consult parents about the work of the school. As a result, a small, but significant proportion does not fully appreciate the problems the school has to deal with and how it is tackling these difficulties. Hence misconceptions and a lack of understanding do on occasions arise on the part of a few parents.

26 The school is becoming an important centre for the community. A Neighbourhood Nursery has recently been set up that provides care for babies as young as six weeks old to enable mothers to return to work and family learning courses are provided for parents. The school also involves the community very well in its work. For example, nine members of the community work with pupils on the school allotment through a link with 'Age Concern'. An added bonus of this link is that it helps pupils to appreciate that older members of the community have experiences and skills that are relevant to them. Other examples of the very strong community links include the community Police Officer who visits school regularly and runs an annual art competition where children produce pictures of police in the community. These are then displayed in the Community Police office. The local Masonic Lodge sponsors an annual handwriting competition with winners in each class receiving book tokens and an overall school winner receiving a trophy. This high level of community involvement is set to develop even further as the Sports and Art centre currently under construction is completed and begins to offer local health and social services as well as sport and leisure activities out of school hours.

27 The school has established good links with schools abroad. For example, links have been developed with schools in Pakistan, Poland and Italy as part of the school's international work and there is an intention to apply for a Global School Partnership Grant to enable teacher-exchange visits to take place between the school and Tameer-e-Millat school in Pakistan. These links have a positive impact on pupils' appreciation of life of children in other countries and their traditions. However, links with local schools, including the main secondary school to which pupils in Year 6 transfer to are less well developed. Pupils are taken on taster days and parents invited to Open Evenings at the feeder secondary school, but there are currently no regular curricular links or opportunities for pupils to work with the teachers they will meet at secondary school through joint teaching units or topics. Introducing such links are currently being discussed and developed. Links are also being developed with a local school where staff are acting as mentors on the Consultant Leadership Programme providing guidance to develop staff in the role of the co-ordinator, but this is in its early stages of development.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is well led and managed. Governance of the school is good. The headteacher's leadership of the school is good. She is satisfactorily supported by subject leaders. The school deals satisfactorily with the potential barriers to learning caused by the well below expected attainment on entry and the significant staff turbulence in recent years.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have taken proactive decisions to improve management and standards in the last year.
- The headteacher has established effective monitoring systems and has implemented initiatives to raise standards that are now beginning to have a positive impact.
- The members of the school improvement team are good role models for teachers through their own leadership of their subjects.
- The role of the subject leaders has developed well since the last inspection.

### **Commentary**

28 Following the disappointing results in the national tests in 2002 the governors and the headteacher reacted strongly to address a range of issues relating to teaching and management that emerged. At this point the headteacher had only been in post for three terms and a number of new staff, including most of the senior management team, had joined the school during that year. The current effective monitoring procedures were introduced and lesson observations by the headteacher and deputy headteacher identified areas of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. As a result, Local Education Authority consultants were involved to train and support teachers in order to raise standards and planning systems were amended.

29 The role of subject leaders was also strengthened so they now take an active role in checking teachers' planning linked to a systematic programme of lesson observations and training for staff. Constructive feedback, on an individual basis, has supported teachers in improving their own particular areas of weakness. As part of this, the senior management team was re-constituted to create a school improvement team that was recently further augmented by the appointment of an experienced teacher, part of whose role is the leadership of science. This appointment has brought an extra dimension to the leadership and provision in science is improving rapidly, particularly in Years 1 and 2. The positive impact of these initiatives were apparent in the much improved results in 2003 and the good achievement of

pupils in Years 3 and 4 in English and mathematics. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has very successfully created an integrated curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception classes based on establishing a very strong team spirit between the staff. However, several of the subject leaders and aspect co-ordinators, including special educational needs, are relatively recent appointments and have had little time to make a significant difference to their areas of responsibility.

30 Governors are very committed to the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil their statutory duties well and have very clear procedures to ensure that all health and safety and other such requirements are regularly checked. The school has agreed a race equality policy, which includes provision to evaluate its effectiveness. They are very supportive of the school leadership, but do challenge school leaders and have not shirked away from making difficult decisions regarding staff and management in the interests of the school.

The school is well managed. Good procedures to evaluate its work have clearly identified the most important areas for development, which are appropriately linked to staff development and performance management systems. The school has good systems in place to monitor and evaluate financial matters, but with a new building, the school is very economical to operate in terms of heating, lighting and general maintenance. As a result, the school has been able to invest considerable sums in further improving teaching resources and the facilities available for pupils. For example, all classes in Years 3 to 6 now have data projectors for teachers to use in lessons and there are plans to extend this to the rest of the school in the near future. The financial data supplied by the Local Authority in the table below is slightly misleading because the expenditure figure does not include funds already committed to various capital projects to improve the facilities for children in the nursery and reception. Nevertheless, the school is projecting a substantial carry forward into the next year. However, this is a planned saving in order to protect staffing levels from September 2005 because, due to local demographic trends, pupil numbers are predicted to fall.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	713790
Total expenditure	649539
Expenditure per pupil	2054

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	92953
Balance carried forward to the next	157204



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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

31 The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Very good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is a major strength.

32 Most children enter the nursery with standards that are well below those that are typical for three and four year olds. However children achieve well and, by the end of the reception year, standards match what is expected in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. Standards have improved in the other areas of learning although they are below those expected for children of this age. This is because when children start at the school many have very poor speaking and listening skills, and despite making good progress these lower skills have an adverse effect on standards in many areas of learning.

33 Teaching and learning are good. Activities are well planned and the results of regular assessments are used effectively to make sure that children build well on their previous learning. All adults have high expectations both of children's behaviour and their work. This has a positive impact on the rate of their learning. There is a good balance between direct teaching and well organised activities. Some teaching strategies are particularly engaging and capture the interest of children very well. For example, when a teacher dressed up and pretended she was a relative of Grace Darling, children were intrigued and joined enthusiastically in the role play activities. As a result, they learnt well. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well as a team throughout the Foundation Stage to make sure that children have equal access to the very broad range of experiences offered. Provision for children with special educational needs or for whom English is a second language is good.

34 Accommodation and resources are very good. Teaching areas are attractive and display children's work very well. The spacious accommodation is used very well and is being further improved, much to the delight of the children. For example, during the inspection, children were very excited about the new outdoor equipment that was being put in place, such as a climbing frame and a wooden boat. The resources enable teachers to select activities that capture children's interest and provide excellent opportunities for learning.

35 The Foundation Stage is led well. Although there have been a few staff changes over the year, because the curriculum and routines are so well established, this has had no adverse impact on children's learning.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships between adults and children are very good.
- Children learn to become independent because of the very good teaching.
- Very clear routines are quickly established, and understood by the children, so that they quickly grow in self-confidence.

#### **Commentary**

36 Children achieve very well because all adults are very good role models and have consistently high expectations for the way they expect children to behave towards each other.

Consequently, they learn to take turns and to share resources. During 'snack-time' in the nursery, many children said 'Please' and 'Thank you' without being reminded. Adults sitting with the children encourage them to talk to each other, and these times become social occasions where children learn to respect what each other has to say. Teachers and teaching assistants are very understanding of the very varied specific needs of the children and this develops children's self-confidence very well. They are expected to be responsible for their personal hygiene and at the start of the session, nursery children confidently leave their parents or carers to pick their name card and register their attendance. By the time they are in the reception class, children know what the expectations are of their behaviour and they respond very well. They know when it is appropriate to say 'sorry'. Children know how to behave sensibly on those occasions when they need to move through the school. When going onto the school field, nursery children lined up sensibly and followed each other in an orderly manner. Children learn about Jesus' birth at Christmas, and what happened to him at Easter. They are encouraged to talk about feelings such as being happy, sad, and lonely.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All adults take every opportunity to encourage children to talk about what they are doing.
- Resources are used very well to support learning to read and write.
- Children find it hard to listen well to each other.
- Many children have limited vocabulary and find it hard to express their ideas clearly.

### **Commentary**

37 Children achieve well from their very low starting point on entry to the nursery. This is because they are consistently encouraged to talk about what they are doing. When children prefer to point to answer questions, adults help them to use appropriate words or short phrases. Despite the consistent efforts to improve children's speaking skills, too many children have a limited vocabulary. This makes it difficult for them to explain themselves clearly. Several children in the reception class persist in calling out (in their enthusiasm to answer questions), and only a few consistently listen carefully to each other. There are plenty of opportunities for children to share books throughout the day. Reception class children not only regularly take home simple 'reading' books, but they also choose books from the school library and regularly visit the Public library. Children's reading is promoted very well through an interactive programme to teach letter names and sounds. Reception children enjoyed being outside and 'playing' a game where they had to respond to words called out, and run to the cone with the correct initial letter. Children recognise a growing number of words to help them read simple stories. They were very proud of being chosen to read to the inspector. Children are given plenty of opportunities to practise writing from entry into the nursery. They are encouraged to make lists, for example, writing down what they need to pack in their suitcase before going to the role-play airport. They are taught how to handle pencils correctly and become aware that writing has meaning. In the reception class, children are supported in their writing by good displays around the room. More able children write their own names clearly and they are beginning to write simple, short sentences. However, the majority of children do not form all letters correctly, and although they write freely very little is readable. Labels, captions and displays of books encourage children to become aware that words have meaning.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are offered a wide range of practical activities.
- Adults use questioning very well to promote children's understanding.
- Good use is made of incidental opportunities throughout the day to practise counting.

### **Commentary**

38 The achievement of children is good due to the strong emphasis placed on teaching number skills and the consistent reinforcing through seizing opportunities throughout the day to develop mathematical understanding. Too few children reach the expectations for their age by the time they are five, because their limited vocabulary skills affects their ability to explain their understanding. In the nursery the activities are practical, including singing and acting number rhymes. These activities make mathematics fun. During snack-time children count how many are sitting in their group, and how many cartons of milk they will need. However, a few children do not count accurately up to numbers such as eight. In the reception class, children have many opportunities to write numbers and count by adding on, on then counting back. Good teaching takes place at the start of the day, when children know how many children should be in the class, how many are absent, then they count back to find out how many are present. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to support small groups of children. In one lesson, the class teacher was challenging more able children to recognise and use the correct mathematical terms when ordering the process of making a sandwich. For example, children correctly used the terms 'first' 'second' 'third' and fourth. Less able children were given different work, very well matched to their abilities, and were supported well to attempt naming the ordinals correctly.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are given a very wide range of opportunities to find out about their world.
- Information and communication technology is taught well.
- Children are encouraged to record what they have learnt.

### **Commentary**

39 Children achieve well because of the good teaching that promotes their learning well through a wide range of practical experiences. Reception children use computers well to manoeuvre 'murtle the turtle' through a maze. They understand positions such as 'left' 'right' 'backwards' and 'forwards' to enable them to control a remote control car and create a route for the 'roamer'. Children are given many opportunities to observe changes in materials. In the nursery, children were making 'chocolate krispies' with a nursery nurse. Her questioning was skilful and encouraged children to note what happened to the chocolate when it was heated. In the reception class, children and their teacher were involved in very effective role-play, which reinforced children's understanding about important people in the past, such as Grace Darling. The school grounds support learning well. Children have looked for mini-beasts and recorded

information about them. In the nursery, children enjoyed role-playing in the 'Airport' and pretended to pilot the aeroplane; they did not have the background knowledge to extend their play without the very good support of the teacher, who questioned children very well, asking where they were going to for their holidays, whether it would be hot, but children could not explain why it might be hot in Spain, answering by saying "It's big". Children learn about their own environment and the bigger world through good opportunities. They visited the local shop, identified food from Italy, then bought the ingredients to take back to school to bake pizzas. They learnt about the Great Wall of China, then constructed their own Wall and tried eating with chopsticks.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The excellent outdoor area offers good opportunities for children to practise their physical skills.

### **Commentary**

40 Children achieve very well in this area of learning because it is not so reliant on their language skills. As a result, the majority of children achieve what is expected in this area of learning by the time they are five. Children achieve well manipulating small tools such as pencils, brushes, scissors and glue. They squeeze, squash, roll and manipulate materials such as play dough. The excellent resources give very good opportunities for children to practise using a range of construction materials. The outdoor play area has very recently been developed with a soft landing area and, during the inspection, a climbing frame and boat were delivered. Children were very excited and enjoyed practising skills of balancing and climbing. They are used to manoeuvring wheeled vehicles and practise skills of pedalling and pushing without bumping into each other. Children practise and improve their co-ordination through stretching and jumping. They kick, throw and catch balls. Nursery children were confident using the vast space of the school field to practise kicking and throwing balls to each other. Reception children used the school hall to practise skills of controlling a moving ball using their feet. They jump and hop with opposite feet keeping appropriate balance and control. The school is in the process of developing the outdoor provision further to enable children to work and play outside in all weathers.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative is development **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children experience a wide range of creative activities – this supports their learning well.

### **Commentary**

41 Children achieve well in this area of learning because of the wide range of experiences and activities offered to them. They draw, paint, model and use collage to create colourful pieces of work. They develop art and design techniques and skills and use their creative skills to support work in other areas of learning. For example, children have made 3 D aphids and clay ladybirds after their hunt for minibeasts. They have made models of

lighthouses, following the story of the Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch. Children enjoy frequent opportunities to listen to, and experiment with music. They listened to the Flight of the Bumble Bee while making their own 'bees'. There are very good role play opportunities but too many children find it difficult to express themselves clearly without adult support in these activities.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well to attain standards in reading and listening that are in line with expectations in Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the higher than expected level in Year 2 in reading is good.
- Standards in writing and speaking are below expectations in Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- The subject is well led with performance data used well to identify priorities for improvement.
- The development of pupils' speaking skills through drama and role-play and the expectations of teachers of pupils' handwriting and presentation are not consistent enough.

#### **Commentary**

42 In the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2, the school's results in reading and writing were well below average when compared to all schools. The results were also well below average in reading and below average in writing when compared to similar schools, partly due to the well below average proportion of pupils reaching the higher than expected level. Standards in the current Year 2 are much improved, although they remain below average. In particular, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher than expected level in reading is good. However, when these pupils started in Year 1, a significant number were not working at the expected levels for their age so overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Year 6 are not as good as last year when they improved significantly on 2002. Although standards in reading and listening are broadly in line with those expected, the overall results in English are affected by pupils' speaking and writing which are below those expected. However, fewer than half of these pupils attained the expected levels in reading and writing in the national tests in Year 2 and these pupils have had a significantly disrupted education in Year 5. Data analysis shows that they have achieved satisfactorily through Years 3 to 6.

43 The headteacher and governors reacted strongly to the very disappointing results in 2002 and re-organised staffing, appointed the new deputy headteacher as subject leader and brought in external consultants to conduct lesson observations and train staff. The impact of their work is beginning to bear fruit as standards in Year 2 are improving, particularly in reading and in Year 4 where most pupils are attaining the expected standards for their age. In addition, the recent appointment of an experienced teacher and member of the senior management to teach Year 2 has further strengthened the teaching in the lower years of the school.

44 There are several factors which are contributing to the improving standards. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, but there is significant variation in the quality of teaching across classes. In Years 1 and 2 teachers focus very heavily on building on pupils' basic skills which they develop so effectively in the nursery and reception. As a result, most pupils have a secure understanding of letter sounds and names and use their knowledge to read and write. Their spelling is secure and their understanding and use of basic punctuation is consistently accurate. In lessons they are provided with a good range of activities to use and practise their

skills. This extends to other subjects such as science, pupils are expected to record their own ideas and describe their investigations. When pupils are working on their topic, for example, Italy during the spring term, pupils are given tasks that require them to do some research and write about what they have found out. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed by teachers' very high insistence on pupils' behaving well and respecting each other's views during class discussions.

45 In Years 3 to 6 teaching is more variable. Most staff build on pupils' basic skills well so that by Year 6, most pupils have secure listening, reading, spelling and punctuation skills. As a result, most pupils' handwriting is neat and legible, but this is not consistent in all classes or subjects where presentation of work is variable and reflects the variation in teachers' expectations of pupils. In reading, higher attaining pupils are expressive and confident, although those with special educational needs lack the same fluency and expression. However, they competently extract relevant information to answer basic questions about the text and the characters. The vast majority of pupils in Year 6 confidently explain to each other and discuss with others what they have done in activities. This is reflected in their writing in which they describe events and what they have done in good detail.

46 Teachers' planning is satisfactory, but variable from class to class. The best planning clearly identifies what pupils of different abilities will learn and the activities they will complete, but this is not consistent across all classes. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers use the individual plans well to focus the work of the teaching assistants, particularly in Year 6 and the curriculum is well supported by additional programmes to help pupils develop their basic skills. Lessons have positive beginnings in which teachers share the objectives of the lessons so pupils know what they will be learning about. Generally, the opening parts of lessons are brisk and pacy with teachers using ICT well to highlight texts and to involve pupils in the lessons. However, there are missed opportunities in lessons to develop pupils' speaking skills further and to increase the depth of their understanding of the topic. For example, teachers do not consistently use follow-up questions to encourage pupils to expand upon their ideas or to convey their feelings and emotions and there is no systematic approach through the school to identify opportunities in lessons to use drama and role-play as an integral part of the teaching of English and other subjects. Pupils' writing reflects their weaker ability to express their own ideas and feelings orally and to relate to the emotions and feelings of characters or events they experience in lessons. Although a few higher attaining pupils write with great expression and vibrancy, most pupils' writing lacks the consistent use of powerful description of events or characters and does not capture the reader by its depth of insight or emotional appeal.

47 The subject is led well. The introduction of effective and thorough procedures to analyse performance data and to monitoring the quality of teaching are the basis for the good improvements that have been made in the provision since the last inspection. They have ensured that the subject leader has a clear understanding of the strengths of the subject and areas for further improvement. Assessment procedures are very thorough and include a systematic approach to assessing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils are involved well in setting targets for their own development, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

48 The use of other subjects to reinforce pupils' literacy skills is satisfactory. In most classes, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their reading skills to research topics, sometimes in the library, and answer questions by finding answers in written text. However, much of the writing in other subjects involves pupils in writing narrative accounts and

factual reports rather than writing from the perspective of others and there are missed opportunities to directly link what pupils are studying in English lessons to activities in other subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The use of ICT by teachers aids pupils well in their learning.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Teachers do not always plan sufficiently well for pupils of differing abilities.
- The introduction and mental warm up to many lessons help pupils achieve well.
- Standards are below average by Year 6. Numeracy skills and the pupils' ability to apply these when solving problems are underdeveloped.



## Commentary

49 Results in 2003 improved at Year 6 on the previous year and were above those of similar schools. However results in Year 2 were well below what might be expected; this reflects the cohort. Although the majority of pupils are currently achieving satisfactorily and the school's own assessment information shows that standards in Year 4 are in line with those expected, standards in mathematics are currently below average in Years 2 and 6. A significant proportion of potentially higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are making insufficient progress as a result of work not being matched sufficiently well to their abilities. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the good support they receive in lessons.

50 By Year 2, pupils develop secure number skills. The use of mental warm up games and activities by teachers is helping pupils build their mental ability to do calculations, for example in a Year 1 class where pupils play a clapping game and count forwards and backwards in three's.

51 By Year 6, evidence indicates that pupils are not confident with mental calculations and lack a range of strategies for solving different problems. The school is aware of this and there is a strong determination to improve. This is being addressed, as in a very good Year 4 lesson where pupils were expected to solve shopping problems and were clearly taught a range of strategies to help them work out the answers. Pupils' ability to produce graphs and handle data is underdeveloped because too little time has been spent on this aspect of mathematics.

52 The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory but is very variable. The quality of lessons ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. Where teaching is consistently satisfactory or better, teachers have a good understanding of the demands of the National Numeracy Strategy and good attention is paid to providing appropriate levels of work for all pupils. Where very good teaching was seen teachers used innovative ways of motivating children such as counting around a circle in five's and ten's, but performing this using different voices. Pupils clearly enjoyed the task and consequently look forward to their mathematics lessons. Lessons have a brisk start and pupils are challenged to calculate quickly mentally. Teachers generally share the objectives of the lessons with pupils at the start so they are very clear about what they have to learn and teaching generally leads them to achieve them, often aided by the effective use of practical resources and activities. For example, in a Year 2 class pupils were beginning to understand division and were helped through a range of practical tasks using cubes and a number line. Teachers make good use of the projectors which have been put in all the classrooms for the older pupils. They use these well to illustrate their teaching with well prepared slides. This approach effectively helps to motivate pupils whilst challenging and clarifying their thinking.

53 To a large degree the weaknesses in teaching identified in the last inspection have been addressed. Most lessons are briskly paced and activities are appropriately planned to meet the needs of all pupils. However, this is not consistent throughout the school. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory, in Year 3 and sometimes in Years 5 and 6 teachers fail to plan appropriately for the range of abilities in the class and as a result the progress of some pupils is limited. In a few lessons, not enough attention is paid to ensuring that pupils are clear of what the learning objective is. In addition, work is pitched at the average ability pupils which results in the higher ability pupils often being given work that fails to challenge them sufficiently and lower ability pupils struggling to understand how to do the set task. This clearly affects their learning and they achieve less well. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the vast majority of lessons are good as a result of the high expectations by teachers, but in these lessons, the

behaviour of a few pupils deteriorates which further slows the pace of the lesson and the pace of learning.

54 The leadership and management of the subject are good. Pupils' work has been analysed and lessons have been observed. As a result of what has been found out, the priorities for taking the subject forward have been correctly identified and the school is starting to address the areas of weakness. The development of pupils' calculation skills for example is a priority but the increased time spent on this means other aspects of mathematics such as shape and data handling are not covered as well. Assessment procedures are thorough and pupils' achievement is now tracked from year to year and targets are set for pupils. Resources are very good and good use is made of them.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

55 Pupils are given some opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects, for example, in science when measuring and then recording in a block graph the size of feet in a Year 2 class. However overall pupils are given too few opportunities to apply and develop these skills in other subjects. This is an area for development.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities for pupils to practise investigative experiments have improved since the last inspection.
- The co-ordinator leads by good example and supports teachers well.
- Insufficient attention is paid to planning activities that are matched well enough to pupils' differing abilities.
- More able pupils are not consistently challenged.

### **Commentary**

56 Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school and standards match what is expected of pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well due to the very good subject knowledge of the teacher who has recently been appointed as subject leader. The teacher leads by good example, and has provided other teachers in the school with good guidance to support teaching investigative science. This is beginning to have an impact and the key issue from the last inspection has been dealt with very well, particularly in the lower years of the school.

57 Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but there are peaks and troughs across the school. In Year 2 pupils are taught well. They enjoy practical science activities, and are given responsibility for working collaboratively in small groups devising their own investigations. For example, pupils were finding out whether the tallest pupil had the largest feet. They know, and understand, the importance of a fair test, and responded well to being given responsibility for their own learning. Where teachers use ICT to support teaching, pupils' learning is good because they are enthusiastic and keen, not only to answer, but also to ask questions. However, these good teaching strategies are not yet consistent throughout the school. Although pupils do a lot of investigative work, in some classes this is over directed by the teacher and their recorded work is often all the same. This results in a lack of challenge,

particularly for the older, more able pupils who do not have enough opportunities to plan, implement and evaluate their own investigations within the context of the lesson objectives. This weakness in the teaching is also reflected in the variable range of opportunities teachers in different classes provide for pupils to use their numeracy and literacy skills in science. It is good in Year 2, where pupils used their learning to measure the height of each other and producing a block graph of their results. In most classes pupils record their findings in tables and they label diagrams, such as explaining an electrical circuit.

58 Science is enriched well through the good use made of the immediate school environment and visits to the locality to investigate plants and animals and their habitats. There is an annual Health Week and the science curriculum is enriched through pupils learning about the importance of exercise, diet and the dangers of drugs. These reflect the school's emphasis on promoting a healthy lifestyle recognised in 2003 by the awarding of the Healthy School's Award.

59 Science is led and managed well. The recently appointed subject leader is very knowledgeable and has already put in place strategies that are beginning to improve the achievement of some pupils. There is regular monitoring of teaching and learning, and the subject leader has identified the need to plan for the differing learning needs of pupils more specifically in order to raise standards further and improve the rate of achievement of the pupils.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been good improvements in resources and staff skills since the last inspection, teaching is now good.
- Teachers use ICT well when teaching in other subjects.
- Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use ICT to aid learning in other subjects.

### Commentary

60 The school has seen the development of ICT as a priority and, as a result of the investment of time and resources, there have been considerable improvements in the standards attained by pupils since the last inspection. The curriculum covers all the strands required in the National Curriculum so pupils overall achieve well in the subject. At Year 2 standards in ICT are below that expected but pupils make good progress and by Year 6 the pupils achieve the expected standards. Pupils receive regular ICT lessons in the well equipped ICT suite and, as a result, their skills in entering and managing information are good. Pupils save and retrieve work and use appropriate software to present information.

61 The youngest children write their names and change the colour and size of the text. In Year 1, pupils enter information into the computer and, using a suitable software package, produce pictograms and bar graphs. In Year 2 pupils control a roamer by giving instructions to the computer to draw shapes on the screen. By Year 2 however pupils have had insufficient opportunity to develop the full range of skills expected for their age and have still to develop secure skills, for example, in using a simple word processor.

62 By Year 4 pupils manipulate images and make repeating patterns, display data in different ways and make a multimedia presentation. By the time pupils are in Year 6 they have secure skills in managing text and data on a computer. They create spreadsheets to calculate savings in an imaginary bank account and create databases. Pupils are confident in using the Internet and in downloading text and pictures to enhance their work. Throughout the school however pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use these skills in other subjects.

63 Overall teaching is good. In good lessons, the teacher built on real examples from the pupils' own experiences, for example, when discussing the use of sensors and where these could be found in real situations. Clear instructions were given by teachers, using the projectors to demonstrate to pupils how to use various applications. For example, a clear explanation of how to create a branching database was given by the teacher to a Year 4 class; this enabled the pupils to make good progress in developing their own database subsequently. Teachers display good subject knowledge which results in them quickly assisting pupils who find difficulties with a particular programme.

64 Classes make good use of the very good ICT suite which allows pupils to work individually on computers and view demonstrations seeing the projected image on a large screen. The school has a good range of suitable software to teach the programme of study. Pupils' attitudes while in the suite are very good. They work sensibly and cooperatively treating the equipment with care and respect. The suite does get hot and provision of some form of temperature control would improve the environment. The room is enhanced by attractive and

informative displays of work from all year groups and a useful portfolio of levelled work which assists staff and pupils in assessing their progress.

65 Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader is knowledgeable and has conducted a thorough audit of learning and teaching and has correctly highlighted priorities for the subject, for example, the need to further develop assessment to move standards forward even further. Together with the governors and senior management team, the subject leader has a clear vision for the development of the subject. The subject is now very well resourced and teachers' skills and knowledge are much improved since the last inspection.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

66 Teachers make good use of the computer projectors in classrooms to enhance their teaching of other subjects, for example, in science in Year 6 when demonstrating a virtual investigation into growing plants. Each classroom has access to computers in addition to the suite however insufficient use is made of these by pupils and as a result pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT to enhance their learning. When ICT is used, it makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning as in a Year 1 class where a program enhanced pupils' understanding of place value. Opportunities to use ICT more widely to enhance learning are often missed.

### **HUMANITIES**

67 **Geography** and **history** were sampled during the inspection. There were not enough lessons in either subject to make secure judgements on the quality of provision or standards in either subject. Until recently the school has used the national guidance to teach the subjects which ensures that pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding steadily over time. The school is currently piloting a topic-based approach linked to its international work to teach significant amounts of both subjects, but particularly the geography elements. This makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development and their appreciation of different countries and lifestyles. However, there is no whole-school overview of the curriculum to ensure that pupils continue to experience the full range and balance of the elements of the National Curriculum or to identify opportunities where pupils can use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

### **Religious Education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources are very good and support learning well.
- Assessment is not used well.
- Work is not matched well to the differing abilities of pupils in classes or across year groups.

### **Commentary**

68 Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards match those expected in Gateshead's Agreed Syllabus for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6.

69 Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but are better in some classes than others. In Year 2 pupils achieve well in knowledge about some important rituals in the Jewish faith. Teaching makes effective use of the very good range of resources and artefacts. For example, pupils have made their own Torah scrolls using an original to base their work on and have written some of the important rules by which Jewish people are expected to live their lives. The range of activities pupils are set is satisfactory and covers the areas prescribed in the Locally Agreed Syllabus, but the detail and quality of pupils' work is variable from class to class in Years 3 to 6. The subject co-ordinator, who has good subject knowledge and uses it well in lessons leads well by example. Pupils have made comparisons between a Christian church and an Islamic mosque, and they have visited the local Church. Pupils have used their literacy skills well to record their understanding, writing diaries, arguments for and against icons, and they have used note-taking skills when watching a video extract. Pupils thought carefully about their visit to the local Church and have written descriptions of their personal feelings. However, this variety in work is not consistent across Years 3 to 6. Lessons are not consistently planned well enough to match activities to the differing abilities of pupils and in samples of pupils' work or in lessons there are very few examples of pupils being given a variety of tasks. As a result, sometimes work is unfinished or results in a lack of challenge, particularly for potentially higher attaining pupils to express their views and opinions using their literacy skills. However, resources have improved since the last inspection and are often used well by teachers to support learning in lessons.

70 The co-ordinator has monitored lessons and has identified the weaknesses in planning for the differing abilities of pupils. However, the school does not use the end of key stage statements in the Locally Agreed Syllabus or the assessment guidance to evaluate what pupils know and understand to ensure that teachers have sufficient information match work better to the differing abilities of pupils.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

71 No lessons in **art and design** or **design and technology** were seen during the inspection, so it was not possible to make firm judgements about the provision or standards in either of these subjects. However, pupils' work and displays in the school were examined.

72 The current displays in the school show that **art and design** activities underpin many of the topics studied in other subjects. Pupils' work is displayed very well in classrooms and around the school. The quality of display is high. The work of famous artists is used well to support learning. Some pupils have used pastels well to create line and tone in the style of Pablo Picasso.

Other pupils have carefully used a grid to scale, either up or down, some original drawings, as well as their own designs. Visitors enrich the subject well. At present a ceramic artist is working with gifted and talented pupils on a piece of art work for the new Arts Centre. A felt maker has been invited into the school to work with some pupils making banners. Students from Northumbria University have worked with older pupils.

73 In **design and technology** pupils in Years 1 and 2 have designed and made playground equipment using different materials and a range of tools. They have learnt about joining materials to make them strong. They used a design 'sheet' to design their own equipment and labelled their diagrams. Their finished products included climbing frames, swings, see-saws and a ghost train. In Years 3 and 4, pupils made belt bags. Good cross-curricular links were made with history as pupils made their bags for a Viking. They chose their own materials, how to fasten their bags and practised sewing before sewing the article. Pupils evaluated their products at the end. In Years 5 and 6, pupils learnt about weight

distribution and testing structures for strength, working collaboratively as a team to construct bridges. They completed detailed evaluation sheets at the end of their work explaining what they found difficult, what worked well and suggestions as to how they might have made their structure better.

74 In **music** the singing in assembly was satisfactory. No lessons were observed so there is no evidence of pupils' achievement or standards in any other aspect of this subject. The pupils are presented with a range of musical experiences these include a visiting jazz band and a gospel choir. Younger pupils enter the school to topical music connected to their learning. Pupils sing for the local community at festive parts of the year. A number of pupils receive additional woodwind or brass instrumental lessons from visiting teachers. These pupils are formed into a school band and perform cooperatively, competently and enthusiastically as a result of good teaching by a visiting specialist. The subject leader takes an active role in promoting the subject and provides good support for other teachers.

75 In **physical education**, insufficient lessons were observed to make a judgement about standards or the quality of teaching and learning. In the lesson that was observed pupils were given insufficient challenge and there was little development of skills as a result their progress was limited. A significant number of pupils were unable to take part because they did not have the correct kit. Facilities and resources for the subject are very good and are being enhanced further by the addition to the school of a community sports hall. Pupils have access to a wide range of extra curricular sports activities including athletics, dance, rugby and football. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to take part in an outdoor activities residential experience in Northumberland. The school makes use of a number of external coaches to enhance the provision for pupils, for example, in tennis and football. The subject leader takes an active role in promoting the subject and provides support for other teachers.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

76 The school makes good provision for pupils in personal, social and health education. Since the last inspection, the appointment of a new co-ordinator has given added emphasis to development of this aspect of the school's work. She has led the introduction of a whole-school scheme of work that has given coherence and clarity to the provision across the school. Throughout the school, staff place a high priority on involving pupils in discussions, encouraging them to consider their work and to express their views and opinions. In the nursery and reception, staff build on children's personal skills very effectively. They encourage them to work, play and communicate with each other so, from a low starting point, by the end of reception, their skills in this area of learning are better than those expected. The very positive attitudes and good behaviour of pupils show that the school makes good provision for developing pupils' personal skills and qualities. Due to the very good relationships in school between adults and pupils, all staff, including the lunchtime supervisors and catering staff contribute well to this provision. There is a consistent system in school of rewards and certificates and pupils understand these systems. The co-ordinator is very clear about how she wants to develop the subject further although, there is no specific action plan to give a framework for her work. Citizenship is promoted well through the democratic processes involved in electing the school council and the links the school has with the local community, especially the garden project that teaches pupils to value and respect the experience and contribution that older members of the community can bring to their lives.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	1
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*